MARIA;

THE

GENUINE MEMOIRS

OF A

YOUNG LADY

OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

The LIFE and ADVENTURES of JOE THOMPSON.

The Ways of Heaven are dark and intricate;
Puzzled in Mazes, and perplex'd with Error!
Our Understanding traces them in vain,
Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless Search;
Nor sees with how much Art the Windings run,
Nor where the regular Confusion ends.

ADDISON.

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MARIA.

CHAP. XIII.

Converſation between Maria *and a Reverend Dean.---Generous Offer of Mr.* Burnet, *and Solicitude of his Daughter.---*Lucy *viſits* Maria, *and her Narrative.---Lady* Latimer *conſents to protect* Maria.

THE Words and Action of the Reverend Dean aſtoniſhed them all; but *Maria*, recovering herſelf, anſwered, "Yes, Dr. *Howard*, it is indeed that "*Maria* who has regretted the Want of "your Advice and Inſtruction ſo long; "but who is now reduced, by thoſe "who once ſhewed her every Regard, to "the moſt abject and cruel Neceſſity: "However, thus unexpectedly beholding "ſo good a Friend, being charitably re-

" ceived by this worthy Family, I have the
" utmoſt Reaſon to adore that Being, whoſe
" Ears have been mercifully opened to my
" Petitions, to my earneſt Supplications
" for Deliverance from the many Ills with
" which I have been ſurrounded; and to
" have the pleaſing Confidence, that I have,
" by no Depravity of Mind, or criminal
" Action, forfeited his Favour, without
" which Proſperity never can be durable,
" and with it Adverſity is eaſily ſupportable.
" Ah! Sir, perhaps you have heard in
" what Manner (I ſhall make no Secret
" of my Affairs to this good Family) I was
" ſuddenly thrown from all the flattering
" Hopes of my Youth, by the very Hand
" which I had Reaſon to think would al-
" ways have protected me; ſince which
" I have met with many Misfortunes; have
" been betrayed into the Hands of that
" Diſgrace to his Name and Quality, Lord
" *Belvidere*; and, had not Providence mira-
" culouſly almoſt provided me an Aſylum in
" the Benevolence of this excellent Clergy-
" man and his amiable Daughter, muſt have
" been ſtill expoſed to all his cruel At-
" tempts, from one of which I have been
" but lately delivered. Happy that your
" Arrival, and your Knowledge of me,
" will aſſure them I am not altogether un-
" worthy of their Attention."

" Oh! my Friend," returned the Dean, addreſſing himſelf to Mr. *Burnet*, " you have
" with you a Treaſure of Virtue and Piety,

" a Lady,

" a Lady, who in the Midſt of Folly and
" Diſſipation, and all the Glare of Pomp
" and Grandeur, preſerved her Integrity of
" Heart and Life, and reſiſted all the Blan-
" diſhments of Pleaſure, and the Allure-
" ments of Vice, which were ſpread before
" her. Hard indeed muſt be her Condition,
" if ſhe were not patroniſed by every
" Friend to Religion and Virtue; if ſhe,
" whoſe Hand was always open to the
" Wants of her Fellow-Creatures, who
" pitied and relieved the Miſerable, ſhould
" want that Aſſiſtance herſelf, which ſhe
" has ſo generouſly beſtowed, to the ut-
" moſt of her Ability, on others. Yes,
" Madam, your Virtues are well known to
" me, and the Source of your Misfortunes.
" You have been vilely treated; and indeed
" I could expect no other from Perſons of
" ſuch bad Principles, as thoſe in whoſe Care
" you were left. Thank God, you have
" eſcaped the Snares that were laid for your
" unſuſpecting Innocence. I have aſſidu-
" ouſly enquired every where after you,
" ſince I heard of your Baniſhment from
" Lord *Beaumont*'s; but without Succeſs.
" I cannot but think it a rare Felicity, that
" you were directed to this Gentleman:
" His Goodneſs, Benevolence, and the
" amiable Qualities of his Daughter, are
" ſomewhat ſo ſimilar to your own, that
" I make no doubt you will be perfectly
" happy in their Society. I ſhould myſelf
" have offered you a Retreat; but having

" loſt Mrs. *Howard* ſince I ſaw you laſt, " I have given off Houſekeeping, and " lodge and board with my Curate, about " ten Miles from this Place: But, dear " Miſs, want nothing; my whole Fortune " is at your Service:—Here," taking out his Purſe, " are a few Guineas; pray " take them; and when you want a freſh " Supply, you ſhall have it with the ſame " Facility as it would be given by a Parent. " I make you bluſh, Miſs: Alas! I know it " is irkſome to your generous Spirit to be " obliged; but I am ſenſible, to add to the " Cruelty of your Treatment, your Jewels " and Clothes are detained from you."—*Maria* modeſtly refuſed the Dean's Offer, telling him ſhe had a few Guineas in her Poſſeſſion, which were ſufficient for her preſent Occaſions. " Beſide," added ſhe, " I ſhall not attempt to trouble this Gentle- " man long; it would, indeed, argue Want " of Conſideration, to deſire it. No, Sir; " my Intent is, by his Recommendation " or your own, to be got into Attendance " upon ſome Lady in the Neighbourhood, " where I may make myſelf uſeful, and " procure, by my Attention and Induſtry, " the Neceſſaries of Life. However I have " formerly been diſtinguiſhed, alas! I know " of no Fortune I can claim; of no Re- " lation that I have in the World, ſince " that, which I once flattered myſelf with, " it ſeems, I have no Manner of Preten- " ſion to. Therefore, Sir, if I can make

" my

" my Attainments of ſome Service to others,
" and thereby ſubſiſt without being burthen-
" ſome to my generous Friends, I ſhall
" have obtained the utmoſt of my Wiſhes."
Here ſhe pauſed, and wiped the pearly Drops that forced themſelves from her Eyes, and wonderfully affected the ſympathiſing Auditors. They looked at each other with a Mixture of Wonder and Concern; at length Mr. *Burnet* ſaid, " Madam, at the firſt
" Sight you prepoſſeſſed us in your Favour;
" that Prepoſſeſſion is now converted into
" Admiration and Eſteem of your Virtues.
" Permit us, then, to pay you the Reſpect
" that is due to your Merit. My Daughter
" will be too much benefited by ſuch a
" Companion, not to prize the Honour of
" your Converſation and Friendſhip as it
" deſerves. I myſelf will endeavour to
" make you forget your Misfortunes, and
" become in the ſtead of a Parent to you.
" I beſeech you then to talk no more of
" leaving us: Though my Income is but
" moderate, it will anſwer all the Demands
" of Reaſon and Temperance, and you
" ſhall ſhare it with us." *Maria* replied in the moſt grateful Terms, but perſiſted in her former Reſolution, declining the Offer made her, in ſuch a Manner as to make the very Refuſal a Favour. She was about to mention Lady *Latimer*, when Dr. *Howard* prevented her, by propoſing, on the Morrow to wait on that Lady, and offer *Maria* to her to be about her Perſon. Their Cha-

racter of her agreed nearly with *Lucy*'s, and Mr. *Burnet* ſaid, he made no Doubt but ſhe would be very happy with her, and he added, "I muſt think, really much ſafer "from the Stratagems and Arts of her Per-"ſecutors, than with me."

The reſt of the Evening was paſſed in friendly and ſocial Converſe, and *Maria*, ſomewhat relieved from the Embarraſſment her Mind had ſuffered, by the late Propoſal, gave ſuch Specimens of her Wit and Judgement, as completed the Conqueſt ſhe had made over the Affections of this little Family. Miſs *Burnet* appeared to be a young Woman of ſolid, but not ſhining Accompliſhments, and had a Heſitation of Speech, and a Dryneſs of Expreſſion, that perhaps did not make any very agreeable Impreſſion at firſt in her Favour; but her Reflections were juſt, and it was evident how much ſhe had benefited by her Father's Inſtructions, and by Reading. If ſhe wanted that Poliſh which is only given to the Fair-Sex by mingling in polite Society, and living in the faſhionable World, ſhe poſſeſſed what creates a more laſting Eſteem: She had juſt and clear Notions, and a Diſcernment much ſuperior to her Years, which were about twenty-ſeven. As to her Perſon, it was ſo formed by Nature, as not to call for a particular Deſcription: She was neither diſagreeable in Face or Perſon, nor yet was ſhe handſome: Suffice it to ſay, ſhe was

of

of a brown Complexion, and of the middle Stature.

When the Hour of Bed approached, which, on Account of their Gueſts, had been poſtponed for a conſiderable Time, Miſs *Burnet* beckoning to *Maria*, they left the Gentlemen to conclude their Bottle, and went up Stairs, when the former expreſſed her Deſire that the latter would ſhare her Apartment; to which ſhe, with her uſual Affability, very willingly conſented.

The next Morning the two Ladies, who ſeemed already to have entertained an Affection for each other, got up early, Miſs *Burnet* being willing, whilſt Breakfaſt was making ready, to entertain *Maria* with a View of the Houſe and Gardens, thinking it might divert her from the Gloom that ſtill hung upon her Countenance. She indeed had various Regrets, though, in all Appearance, her Safety was ſecured. Often her Thoughts dwelt upon the forlorn Condition ſhe was reduced to; as often her *Henrietta* was remembered with ſincere, though mournful Regards; and the Danger ſhe apprehended *Lucy* and her Brother, if not the whole Family, were in, of ill Uſage upon her Account, filled her Mind with painful Apprehenſions. However, ſhe ſtudied to divert theſe Reflections, and to accommodate herſelf to the Views of her good-natured Conductreſs.

They were joined in about an Hour by the two Divines; and Dr. *Howard*, ſingling

out *Maria*, walked with her down a private Walk, and begged to know her Adventures ſince her Departure from Lord *Beaumont*'s. She briefly related all ſhe had ſuffered, but, from a peculiar Delicacy, never mentioned the Name of *Worthy*, and concealed the real Motives of her leaving that Family, contenting herſelf with recapitulating her being artfully decoyed whilſt ſhe was enquiring for a Place of Safety to retreat to, and in conſequence the late Tranſactions. At the Concluſion, ſhe begged he would put the Reſolution of the preceding Night into Execution, and recommend her to Lady *Latimer*. The Doctor would again have perſuaded her to continue at Mr. *Burnet*'s, and, to encourage her, gave her a juſt Picture of that worthy Clergyman and his Daughter: But *Maria* remained fixed in her firſt Deſign: She told him, her Judgment would not permit her to be again dependent upon any but herſelf; that it could never be ſuppoſed there could be any Satisfaction in a Life of idle Dependency; and that all Laws, Divine and Human, preſcribed Activity and Induſtry, particularly to thoſe who were not born to Fortune; that it would have been happy for her, if ſhe had been placed by Providence in a low and humble Station; ſhe then ſhould never have been expoſed to Envy or Calumny, and had paſſed with Tranquillity through Life: But ſhe would now endeavour to conform her Mind to her Circumſtances, and practiſe the humble Du-

ties

ties allotted her, without looking back to the Condition ſhe had formerly held, and which had expoſed her to ſo much Diſtreſs. "I will be patient, dear Sir, under all the "Trials Providence thinks meet I ſhould "undergo, which will make me acceptable, "I hope, to God, agreeable to my Friends "and thoſe about me, and eaſy to myſelf. "I begin to perceive, that Misfortunes "which befall myſelf appear little to me, "whilſt thoſe which fall on others appear "grievous and lamentable. I am now in "much Grief on account of Mr. *Holmes*'s "Family, but particularly on that of the "kind Maid and generous Youth I have "been mentioning to you. You cannot "do me a more acceptable Kindneſs, than "to order ſome body to enquire after them, "and to certify me that they are not under "any Affliction through my Means."

Dr. *Howard*, finding her Reſolution unconquerable, promiſed her he would go over to Lady *Latimer*'s after Dinner, and would concert Methods with Mr. *Burnet* to ſatisfy her alſo in regard to the other Article of her Commiſſion.

At Breakfaſt the Converſation turned upon the Character of Lady *Latimer* and her Family. Mr. *Burnet*, as well as the Doctor, gave her the greateſt Praiſes for her Generoſity, Charity, and Benevolence. The latter indeed hinted, that ſhe had for ſome time begun to liſten too much to the Deluſions of a Set of Enthuſiaſts, who had ſpread themſelves

ſelves through all Parts of the Kingdom, which he was fearful would in Time put an End to that Current of indiſcriminate Bounty which had ſo long bleſſed her poor Neighbours of all Parties, and confine it to thoſe particular People. Mr. *Burnet* replied, that at preſent he did not perceive ſhe abſented herſelf from Church; and that, if ſhe did in ſome Things conform to their Ways of Thinking, he hoped it would have no Effect to contract that Good-Will which it was our Duty to bear to Mankind in general; that ſhe had a Niece with her, who but ill ſupported the Reſtraints of a ſober, regular Family, having been bred up amongſt all the Gaieties of the faſhionable World: He could perceive ſhe conformed herſelf to her Aunt's Humour, in hopes of being a conſiderable Gainer at her Death, and had hitherto carried herſelf ſo plauſibly as to give the old Lady no Reaſon to ſuſpect her Motives: That ſhe had no body immediately attendant upon her Perſon but this Niece, who, he believed, would be glad of an Aſſiſtant to relieve her from being conſtantly in her Preſence, and conſequently under perpetual Reſtraint: So that, between two ſuch Diſpoſitions, Miſs *Maria* would find perhaps ſome little Difficulty how to behave.

Maria obſerved, that ſhe conceived no ſuch great Difficulty in accommodating herſelf to both their Tempers, if the young Lady's only Fault was youthful Levity. As

to

to that of the Lady *Latimer* herſelf, it was too conſonant to her own to be diſagreeable; and as to the Niece, her Company and Converſation might afford ſome Relaxation from the Severity of her Aunt's Way of Thinking, which rather diſcouraged young Perſons of a volatile and lively Conſtitution. She hoped, however, her Confinement, if Lady *Latimer* approved of her coming to her, would not be ſo ſtrait as to afford her no Opportunity of ſeeing Miſs *Burnet*, whoſe Friendſhip ſhe would always endeavour to cultivate.

Miſs *Burnet* replied with ſome Vivacity, and viſible Diſcontent, "Miſs, if my Com-"pany will, you think, be agreeable, what "Reaſon can you have for flying it? I could "wiſh we might be ever together, and that "the Deſign of your going any where elſe "were laid aſide." *Maria* bowed, and bluſhed, but returned no Anſwer in a Point on which ſhe was already reſolved; and the Parſon's Man was, after Breakfaſt, ſent to *Holmes*'s, and was ordered, without making any particular Enquiry, to obſerve what paſſed in the Family.

Miſs *Burnet* and *Maria* ſat down to their Needles after Breakfaſt was concluded, and they had dreſſed themſelves; and talked of a Variety of common Matters, till the former ſaid, "Miſs, how long have you known "the Dean?"—"I believe," *Maria* anſwered "near ſix Years: He was Domeſtic "Chaplain to the Nobleman with whom I "reſided; and what always raiſed him "greatly

" greatly in my Opinion was, that, though " he had to do with ſtrange libertine Peo- " ple, he never did or ſuffered any thing " derogatory to his Character, which I be- " lieve is more than can with Truth be ſaid " of many Gentlemen of his ſacred Func- " tion in the like Circumſtances; and, if " I don't miſtake, he was preſented to the " Living he enjoys by the Earl of *Beaumont*. " I always thought him a moſt agreeable " Companion, a valuable Friend, and a " Man of Virtue and Honour, and am " obliged to him on more Accounts than " one. I am glad to ſee him look ſo well; " for he muſt now be near Sixty." " I " believe, not ſo much, Madam," Miſs *Burnet* replied, with a Sigh; " and I am glad " to hear you have ſo good an Opinion of " him, which indeed I believe he deſerves. " He has been a Widower a great while, " which ſhews his Reſpect to the Memory " of his Wife."—" She was, I have heard, an " amiable Woman," returned *Maria*, " but " I never had the Happineſs to ſee her; and " I believe he was an excellent Huſband." Miſs *Burnet* bluſhed, and ſeemed ſo diſcon- certed and out of Order, during this little Chit-chat about the Dean, that *Maria* be- gan to think he was her Suitor, which be- came a Subject of her Admiration, as there was ſo great a Diſparity of Years between them. He was indeed an handſome, come- ly Man; and a Life of Temperance had preſerved a fine Colour in his Cheeks; nor would

would a Stranger have imagined he was more than Fifty. In ſhort, before the Gentlemen joined them, poor Miſs *Burnet* diſcovered her Secret, and let *Maria* know, that, if her Father gave his Conſent, to obtain which was Part of the Dean's preſent Buſineſs there, they ſhould be ſoon united in the Bands of Wedlock. *Maria* felicitated her upon her Proſpect of Happineſs, but in her own Mind made many Reflections on what ſhe heard, not much to the Advantage either of the Dean's, or Miſs *Burnet*'s Underſtanding.

Dinner over, the two Gentlemen ſet out in Mr. *Burnet*'s Chaiſe for Lady *Latimer*'s, and, ſoon after their Departure, the Servant who had been ſent to *Holmes*'s returned. He reported, that he found the Family ſeemingly in Peace, and that *Roger* told him his Siſter would be over with them before Evening; which gave *Maria* great Pleaſure, as ſhe gathered from that Circumſtance, all was well; and in about an Hour after, *Lucy* arrived. *Maria* ran to meet her as ſhe came up the Walk, and flinging her Arms round her Neck, cried, "My deareſt Friend, do "I behold you again ſo ſoon, and may I "conclude that you have met with no ill "Uſage ſince your generous Care of me?" *Lucy* returned her Salutation with a modeſt, though warm Embrace, and cried,—"No, "Miſs, we got over the Affair better than "I feared we ſhould. *Roger* came back, "and turned his Horſe into the Field, with-

"out

" out being perceived, and made my Heart
" glad with the Aſſurance of your ſafe Ar-
" rival and kind Reception. I had for ſome
" time kept the Parlour-Door ſhut, where
" the Servants, I ſuppoſe, imagined you
" ſtill ſat; and, ſoon after my Brother's
" Return, I went in, and, for the firſt
" Time in my Life, practiſed Deceit. I
" ran in a great Fright into the Garden,
" and all over the Houſe, calling upon
" every body, and wringing my Hands,
" crying you were gone, and we ſhould be
" murdered for not looking better after you.
" Immediately we all ſallied out different
" Ways, ran till we were fatigued to Death
" almoſt, and returned, as well we might,
" as wiſe as we were when we ſet out. *Ro-*
" *ger* went to my Father and Mother with
" the Tidings, and they hurried home with
" all Expedition, little imagining how your
" Eſcape was effected. I muſt do my Fa-
" ther the Juſtice to ſay, he ſeemed leſs
" chagrined than my Mother; and ſhe in-
" deed ſoon joined in hoping you had got
" to ſome Place of Safety. " I am quite out
" of Conceit," ſays he, " with this Af-
" fair: My Houſe is no Priſon;—they
" may have their Money again, if they will:
" —I'll have no further Concern, and be-
" gin to think ſhe's not his Wife, as well
" as *Roger*."—" I am ſure," anſwered my
" Mother, " ſhe neither appeared mad with
" Religion, or any thing elſe;—a ſweet
" dear Lady as ſhe is:--Raviſh his own Wife,
" *gather!*

" *gather!*—No, no, *John*, let her go—
" there's ſome Villainy, I tell you.—Don't
" we know Sir *Thomas?*—And this fine Fel-
" low, I warrant, is no better than he.—
" But why return the Money?—I'm ſure
" I'd keep it; we have had Plague enough,
" ſure!"

" We were glad to ſee them, dear Ma-
" dam, in this Temper, to be ſure; and
" though at firſt it was propoſed to ſend to
" all the Houſes about after you, that De-
" ſign was no more mentioned; and we
" heard nothing of Sir *Thomas* or the Gen-
" tleman till this Morning, when they ſent
" for my Father to embark him in a Scheme
" of decoying you, under various Preten-
" ces, to the Sea-Coaſt: But when he told
" them that you had got away, a Mad-
" man could not, it ſeems, behave more
" furiouſly than the Gentleman did. He
" curſed, ſwore, tore about, and, if Sir
" *Thomas* had not interfered, would have
" knocked my Father down, ſaying, he
" was ſure the old Rogue and his Son had
" been bribed by her to convey her away.
" My Father gave him as good as he
" brought, and at laſt told him, though he
" knew nothing of it, he was glad you were
" gone. He never liked Treachery, and
" he believed, if the Truth was known, he
" had as much Right to the Lady as him-
" ſelf. Sir *Thomas* was very merry upon the
" Occaſion, and bid my Father go about
" his Buſineſs; he did not ſee he was to

" blame;

" blame; and then, turning to the Gen-
" tleman, jeered him, crying out,—" G—
" d— me, my Lord, your Project is all
" blown up;—here's an End to a Month
" or two's Contrivance, attended with Ex-
" pence enough. D— me, had you taken
" my Advice, and done the Buſineſs at
" once, it would now have been over; but
" you muſt beat the Buſh, and be d—'d to
" you, whilſt Puſs ſtole away. I'll be
" d—'d, however, if ſhe can have got far:
" Let's ſet off To-morrow, and courſe af-
" ter her; and if you get her again, down
" with her at once, without Ceremony."
" The Gentleman appeared very ſulky and
" out of Humour at his laughing at him,
" and ſtamped about; and my Father ſays,
" he thought at laſt they would have come
" to Blows; in which Humour he left them.
" Hearing how well my Father had got off,
" *Roger* and I held a Conſultation, and
" determined to let him and my Mother in-
" to the Secret of your Eſcape and preſent
" Reſidence; and when I informed them of
" what you communicated to me, inſtead
" of being diſpleaſed, they commended us
" highly, and ſaid we had ſaved them from
" committing a great deal of Wickedneſs.
" They ordered me to tell you, they ſin-
" cerely repent of the Share they had in
" your ill Uſage, beg you would think they
" were impoſed upon, and crave your Par-
" don; but deſire you to be upon your

" Guard,

"Guard, as they ſuppoſe the two Rakes "will ſpare no Pains to find you out."

Here the gentle Maid concluded her Narrative, which gave ſo much Pleaſure to *Maria* as ſhe could difficultly expreſs. "Forgive them! my *Lucy*:—Yes, tell your "Father and Mother that I have Reaſon "to bleſs the Moment I came under their "Roof. If for nothing more, yet, as it "has brought me acquainted with their "worthy Daughter and her Virtues. But "when I conſider it might have been my "hard Lot to have fallen into brutiſh and "vile Hands, who would ſtick at no Means, "though ever ſo baſe, to aſſiſt my Perſecutor, how truly thankful to Heaven I "ought to be, that they were employed in "the hateful Buſineſs! Tell them, I know "nothing but Impoſition upon them could "have induced them to act as they have "done, and that I hope ſome time or other "I ſhall be able to ſhew my Gratitude for "their Favours, as well as to you, my "dear *Lucy*, and your Brother. Mean "time, my Dear, make no Doubt of my "Affection; I ſhall ever reflect upon the "Service you did me, with the greateſt Senſe "of Gratitude; and let our Friendſhip continue to the End of our Lives."

Maria then told her all that had paſſed at Mr. *Burnet*'s, and that that Gentleman and the Dean were gone to Lady *Latimer*'s to recommend her to that Lady's Protection. *Lucy* heard with Tranſport every Word ſhe

ſhe uttered, and her honeſt Heart overflowed with Joy at the Felicity her Friend was like to meet with. Miſs *Burnet*, ſtudious to oblige *Maria*, and who always loved *Lucy*, made her ſtay Tea with them, careſſed her as much as that Lady, and when ſhe went home ſent their Man to ſee her ſafe there.

It was late before Dr. *Howard* and Mr. *Burnet* returned from Lady *Latimer*'s; but they brought good Tidings for *Maria*. That Lady, after hearing her Character and her Caſe from thoſe Gentlemen, not only promiſed to take her into her Family, but to make her her Companion, and ſaid ſhe ſhould think her Company and Converſation a great Happineſs. Miſs *Lætitia*, her Niece, was delighted with the Idea of having an Aſſociate of her own Age; and they were both ſo eager to ſee her, that the next Morning was appointed for her Removal there. "And now, dear Madam," ſaid the Dean, "you will find an agreeable Retreat "from all your Dangers and Diſtreſſes, and "I ſhall have the ſupreme Happineſs of "ſeeing your Virtues placed where they "may once more exert themſelves to the "Benefit of Mankind. If Lady *Latimer* "has any Foibles that obſcure her great "and good Qualities, your Converſe will "contribute to abate, and perhaps to cure "her of them. You have ſuch juſt No-"tions of your Duty to God and your "Neighbour, ſo enlarged and rational a

"Knowledge

"Knowledge of Religion, ſo amiable a "Temper and Diſpoſition, that all who "have any Connection with you muſt be "happy. You will qualify the religious "Zeal of the old Lady, and turn it into "its proper Channel, and your Example "will reclaim the giddy young one to Max-"ims of Prudence and Temperance. Miſs "*Lætitia* is a charming Girl, but brooks "her preſent Confinement, after a Life of "Pleaſure and Diſſipation, very hardly."

"I take the young Lady," interrupted Mr. *Burnet*, "to be pretty much of a Coquette; "her Behaviour at Church (where, rather "than not play off her Charms, ſhe will "aim her Shafts at the very Peaſants, for "ſhe muſt have Admirers of ſome Sort or "other) convinces me of it. I have fre-"quently officiated there for Mr. *Dyer*, our "old Friend, and could not help taking "Notice of her Manner of Behaviour, "which ſeemed very much to ſcandaliſe the "Country Auditors."

"It would certainly have an exceeding "good Effect upon the common People," ſaid *Maria*, "if their Superiors ſhewed "more Reverence and Attention in Places "of public Worſhip; and ſurely they muſt "be unacquainted with that calm and tran-"quil Temper of Mind, that ariſes from "the devout Practice of religious Duties, "to behave otherwiſe. 'Tis very ſurpriſing, "that thoſe who are careful to omit no "Point of Ceremony at a Viſit, or in a

"Draw-

" Drawing-Room, ſhould not ſee the Ab-
" ſurdity, and indeed the Enormity, of
" Careleſſneſs or Levity when they at-
" tend the Worſhip of their Creator, the
" Preſerver and Governor of the Univerſe."

Miſs *Burnet* took notice, that it looked as if People of Quality and Faſhion came into the Country merely to depiſe every thing in it. Too generally a ſupercilious Pride attends their Behaviour there on every Occaſion; but more particularly at Church, where they ſeem reſolved to diſplay their Contempt for all they hear, and all they ſee, not conſidering, that, whilſt they thus weaken the Effects the Preacher ſhould have on his Audience, they are aiming to deſtroy thoſe very Principles of Reverence to God, and Reſpect to his Miniſters, which are the greateſt Security, in their Tenants, for the Payment of their Rents, and the Support of their Pleaſures. So that, from every Conſideration, the Rich and Great ſhould behave reverently and decently at public Worſhip.

Maria, with Heart-felt Satisfaction, informed them of *Lucy*'s Viſit and Intelligence, and they ſincerely ſhared her Joy upon the happy Turn Matters had taken for the young People, whom Dr. *Howard* and Mr. *Burnet* praiſed to the Skies for their Virtue and Fortitude, and promiſed on every Opportunity to reward them.

The reſt of the Evening was ſpent in a friendly ſocial Manner; they retired to Reſt,

Reſt, charmed with each other, and *Maria*'s Heart exulted in the Proſpect of Happineſs that ſeemed opening upon her: But Miſs *Burnet* expreſſed ſome Diſcontent that ſhe ſhould ſo ſoon be deprived of her Company, of which ſhe every Hour became more and more enamoured.

CHAP. XIV.

Maria *has a narrow Eſcape.—She is preſented to Lady* Latimer.—*Her Reception.—Gains the Affection of that Lady.—Her Niece* Lætitia's *Behaviour.---Character of Lady* Latimer.—*Amour between Lord* Belvidere *and* Lætitia.

AS ſoon as the riſing Sun had illumed the Horizon, the two Ladies left their Beds, and the Morning being remarkably fine, they went into the Garden to inhale the Odours which cultivated Nature had ſcattered around with no ſparing Hand, and to feaſt their Eyes with the various Beauties of the Seaſon, which formed an enchanting Proſpect on every Side, as far as the View could extend.

"Happy, cried *Maria*, happy thoſe Mor-
"tals, who enjoy Content in a Mediocrity
"of Circumſtances! Oh! my dear Miſs,
"were you, but for a few Days, to be
"Witneſs to the Buſtle and Hurry, the
"dreadful

" dreadful Hopes, the fated Anxiety of high " Life, perpetually in Search of Pleasures " which fleet swiftly away, and leave last- " ing Regrets behind, you would say with " me, that your Situation of Life is to be " envied. Here you enjoy true Felicity, " and every thing contributes to enliven " your Hours, without depraving your " Mind. Your Pleasures are rational, and " such as are fitted for sensible Beings, " whilst Peace and Concord smile on all " you do. Well has a favourite Poet of " mine observed,

" *Greatness, in glitt'ring Forms display'd,*
" *Affects weak Eyes much us'd to Shade,*
" *And by its falsely-envy'd Scene*
" *Gives self-debasing Fits of Spleen:*
" *But they, whom bless'd Content inspires,*
" *This Science learn---to bound Desires:*
" *By happy Alchemy of Mind*
" *They turn to Pleasure all they find:*
" *They both disdain, in outward Mien,*
" *The grave and solemn Garb of Spleen:*
" *Unmov'd, when the rude Tempest blows,*
" *Without an Opiate they repose;*
" *Nor, meddling with the Gods Affairs,*
" *Concern themselves with distant Cares;*
" *But place their Bliss in mental Rest,*
" *And feast upon the Good possess'd.*"

By the Time she had repeated these Lines they had got to the Extremity of the Garden, where a *Chinese* Rail and a deep Ditch divided

divided it from a Meadow, which deſcended, by a continual Declivity on every Side, to a River that laved its verdant Borders, and thence meandering, ran far into the Country. A neat Gate formed an Out-let into this beautiful Meadow, which they were going to open, in order to extend their Walk, when a Countryman, ſeemingly old and decrepit, roſe up on the other Side, and exclaimed, "Oh, God! what ſhall "I do! what will become of my wretch-"ed Wife! Ladies, in yonder Bottom, "a poor Woman is juſt now taken with "the Pains of Labour, as we were going "to our daily Employ.—Do, for the Love "of God, lend her your Aſſiſtance; there "is no Houſe but yours near enough to "fly to for Help!"

If the ſudden and unexpected Sight of a Man, in that Solitude, extremely ſurpriſed them, his Tale moved their Pity equally; and Miſs *Burnet* was upon putting her Key directly into the Gate, that they might fly to the poor Woman's Succour, when *Maria*, ever fearful and ſuſpecting Danger, held her Hand, having obſerved two or three Horſemen at the other Side of the Field, who bent their Eyes directly towards them, They immediately ran to the Houſe, and alarmed Dr. *Howard* and Mr. *Burnet* with their Obſervations, who, attended by their two Servants, went directly towards the Spot, opened the Gate, and expected to ſee the Countryman ſtill at his Sta-

tion; but upon their Appearance the Horſemen galloped off, and they could find neither Countryman, or Woman in Labour, any where about that, or the adjoining Fields.

They were all convinced this was a new Attempt of *Belvidere*'s, who had now found out where the young Lady had fled to, and that, if *Maria* and her Companion had followed the Dictates of their Humanity, ſhe would have been ſeized and carried off. Therefore, as Mr. *Burnet* thought his Houſe was not a proper Security againſt ſuch Deſperadoes, it was agreed, that as ſoon as they had breakfaſted, they would carry her to Lady *Latimer*'s, whoſe Quality, Fortune, and Number of Servants, would ſecure her Safety.

Before they ſet out, the Servants were ſent all round the Houſe to a conſiderable Diſtance, to ſee if any Perſons were lurking in the Vicinity, but found the Coaſt clear; and, after taking an affectionate Leave of Miſs *Burnet*, who ſeemed much affected with their Separation, *Maria* ſet out with Mr. *Burnet* in his Chaiſe, Dr. *Howard*, and the two Men-Servants armed with Blunderbuſſes, riding at ſome Diſtance behind, and determined to protect their Charge, at the Hazard of their Lives.

In this Manner they arrived at *Latimer-Hall*, a huge Gothic Building, which ſeemed to command the adjacent Country, and were received within the maſſy Gates, well fortified with Iron, and over a Draw-Bridge,

into the Court-Yard, where being alighted, they were conducted by the Steward into her Ladyſhip's Preſence.

She was ſitting in a large Dining-Room, with her Niece, Miſs *Lætitia*, who was reading to her from Mr. *Law*'s Treatiſe on Chriſtian Perfection; and when ſhe beheld her Viſitors, advanced to meet them, with a very polite and friendly Air: "You "are welcome, Gentlemen; you do me "great Honour.—So, this is the young "Lady you mentioned."—Then, ſtepping to *Maria*, and ſaluting her, continued, "My Dear, I ſhall be proud of your "Company.—What I have heard of your "Virtue and Piety delighted me; but, "upon my Word, your Face and Perſon "would have been ſufficient Recommenda-"tions. Ah! Child, wonder not that you "have been tempted in this degenerate Age, "but glory that you have triumphed and "preſerved your Innocence. Pray be ſeated, "Gentlemen; I preſume I ſhall have your "Company at Dinner." The Gentlemen bowed their Aſſent, and then her Ladyſhip eyeing *Maria*'s Bundle, which had been brought into the Room after her by one of the Servants, ſaid ſmilingly, "I ſee, Miſs, "your Wardrobe is but ſcanty.—Poor "Thing,—thou haſt had little Time to "dreſs indeed; but I have ſent to my "Tradeſmen for Linen, Stuffs, and Silks, "and will ſoon ſupply thee with every "thing neceſſary; and nothing ſhall be

" wanting on our Parts to make thy Abode " with us agreeable."

Maria, who was at firſt a little diſconcerted by her Addreſs, had by this Time ſomewhat recovered herſelf, and returned, " Your Ladyſhip's Goodneſs covers me with " Confuſion; but I ſhall exert every Fa- " culty I have in your Service, and hope to " prove the favourable Account my worthy " Friends have given of me is in ſome Re- " ſpects juſt. Whatever I may be deficient " in, however, I am ſure your Ladyſhip " will diſcover in me no Want of Grati- " tude, and a conſtant Attention to oblige " you."

Lætitia, during this Interchange of Civilities, eyed the young Lady from Head to Foot, and ſeemed, if one might gueſs her Sentiments from her Looks, to be mortified at obſerving her Beauty ſo much exceeded; nay, her Action was a plain Indication of what paſſed in her Mind. She had courteſied, in return to *Maria*'s Salute of her, and was then employed in gazing at her, and in conſulting her own Perſon in a large Pier-Glaſs which hung before her, till ſhe was awakened from her mortifying Compariſon by her Aunt, who cried, " Come, " *Lætitia*, let us have your Aſſiſtance to " make my Friends welcome: Ring the Bell " for the Bill of Fare; I ſhall, I believe, " make an Addition to it: I know Mr. " *Burnet* is fond of Fiſh, and I have juſt " now received a fine Turbot from *London*,

" a Preſent from a Nobleman, who does " me the Honour now and then to think of " his old Relation. Whilſt Dinner is pre- " paring, you ſhall ſhew your new Friend " the Houſe and Gardens, wherein I hope " ſhe'll ſpend many an agreeable Hour."

All this performed, *Lætitia* ſignified her Readineſs to attend *Maria*, who departed with her, and left the old Lady and the two Divines together, to whom ſhe ſaid, " Upon " my Word, you have brought me an an- " gelic Creature indeed! If her Mind is " like her Perſon, ſhe is all Perfection. " What a fine Preſence! what an amiable " Countenance! what ſtriking Features! " what Dignity reigns throughout her Per- " ſon! I think I never beheld ſo complete " a Beauty before. Good God! how could " any body think of injuring ſuch Inno- " cence! But, alas! in this vicious Age, " what ſhould engage the Eſteem and Ve- " neration of the Men, ſerves only to ex- " poſe the Poſſeſſor to the Attacks of the " Baſe and Libidinous. I thank you heartily, " Gentlemen, for your Preſent!---I believe " I ſhall never bear to part with her."--- Thus the good old Lady ran on, (for of her few Foibles Loquacity was not the leaſt) hardly giving any Liberty for the Dean or Mr. *Burnet* to put in a Sentence.

Mean time *Lætitia* carried *Maria* through all the Apartments of the huge Manſion, in which the Furniture and every thing diſplayed the antient Magnificence of our

Anceſtors. The Hall was hung with Pikes, Spears and Guns, diſpoſed in a groteſque Manner; the Chambers were large, and the Windows caſt on them a gloomy awful Light. A large Library pleaſed the Eyes of *Maria* in one Room, and in another were diſpoſed every Inſtrument of Muſic, with a Chamber-Organ of exquiſite Workmanſhip. A Garden of ſeveral Acres, an Orchard, and a Park of great Extent, were all included within a deep Moat, which, with a ſtrong and high Wall, ſurrounded the venerable Structure. From the upper Apartments a moſt raviſhing Proſpect greeted the Eye, of flowery Meads, interſected with murmuring Streams and purling Rivulets, on which the Sun ſhed his golden Influence. The Flocks and Herds were cropping and grazing over the verdant Carpet; and the diſtant Appearance of elegant Seats, and ſcattered Towns and Villages, terminated the enlivening Landſcape.

Maria, almoſt bewildered with ſo many Objects, expreſſed her Admiration and Delight at theſe Spectacles, and politely apologized for giving the young Lady ſo much Trouble. "Ah! Miſs," *Lætitia* replied ſmiling, "would you imagine now, that "what ſeems ſo pleaſing to you ſhould to "me be utterly diſguſtful? Here have I "paſſed two tedious long Years with a "talking old Woman, dead to every En-"joyment of Life, and a Parcel of ſuper-"annuated Servants, that are ſo many Em-

" blems of the Ravages of Time, and Me-
" mento's of Mortality. We have few
" Viſitors, but ſome ruſty old Parſons and
" moralizing Prudes, who din one's Ears
" with Religion, and Houſewifery, and
" Charity, and all that; and once a Week
" we go in State to the Pariſh-Church,
" where one is ſure to be ſtared at by all the
" Bumpkins, and their ſtarch'd-up Wives
" and Daughters, till one is ready to burſt
" with Laughter at the ridiculous Creatures,
" who are like ſo many Pieces of walking
" Clock-Work: Then I have my Walks
" amongſt the Sick, and the Lame, and the
" Blind; for you muſt know I'm my Aunt's
" Almoner, and Half the Week I am em-
" ployed in ſpreading Plaiſters, making
" Diet-Drinks, and cutting out Shirts and
" Shifts for the Poor. Well, thank God,
" I ſhall now have one converſible Compa-
" nion.---Lord! Miſs, you'll be ſoon tir'd.
" Dear *London*, how I ſigh after thy *Vaux-*
" *hall*, *Ranelagh*, *Garrick*, *Beard*, the Mall,
" the Court, and all the pretty gay Fellows
" included within thy Walls! Good God!
" Miſs, I have not ſeen a handſomer Fel-
" low than my Aunt's old Steward for this
" Age. Reading, reading, thrumming my
" Harpſichord, ſtretching and yawning all
" Day long, theſe have been the Entertain-
" ments of poor *Lætitia* ever ſince ſhe left the
" ſparkling Town, for ſordid Intereſt, to re-
" tire to this old, ugly, Gothic Lump of Bricks
" and Mortar; and not one Admirer has

" paid Homage to my Beauty! Heigh-ho!
" what a dreadful Life I have endured!"

Lætitia's Harangue gave *Maria* no great Opinion either of her Prudence, or good Senſe; but as ſhe thought not proper ſo ſoon to contradict her Notions of Things, ſhe agreed with her, that to a Lady of Vivacity a Country Retirement ſo long together muſt be ſomewhat irkſome, though Solitude and Retirement were more eligible to her than Crouds and Noiſe, and all the Fluttering of the Gay and Thoughtleſs.

" Well, well, my new Companion," *Lætitia* returned, " you'll have enough of it,
" aſſure yourſelf; but, for my Part, I have
" no Reliſh of your ſentimental Pleaſures,
" as my Aunt calls them; and if any gay
" young Fellow of Quality would come down
" and waft me to *London* in his Coach and
" Six, (if adorned with Coronets the better)
" and beſtow himſelf upon me for Life, I'll
" leave you to ſighing Breezes, mournful
" Rooks, purling Streams, enamelled Meads,
" and cooling Shades, which are much
" more delightful in the Poets Deſcriptions
" than I have found them in Reality."

They found her Ladyſhip and the two Divines, upon their Return, very buſy in Diſcourſe on the Doctrine of Original Sin, which held them till Dinner was upon Table, when they removed to another Apartment, where their Meal was elegant, and the Table covered with all the Seaſon could produce. Her Ladyſhip eat heartily, as did the Gentlemen

tlemen and *Lætitia*; but *Maria*, revolving her new Situation, forgot her Plate often, and was chid by her new Friend for not eating with an Appetite.

Soon after Dinner, the Dean and Mr. *Burnet* took their Leave, when Lady *Latimer* carried *Maria* into a neat Chamber, well-furniſhed, and told her to call that, and all it contained, her own, ſhewing her the Conveniences for putting her Linen, Clothes, and every other Particular ſhe might become Miſtreſs of. She then informed her, that Attendance about her own Perſon, to work, read with, and to afford her her Converſation, was all ſhe required; that ſhe was in every thing her own Miſtreſs, and if ſhe continued with her till her Deceaſe, ſhe would take care to provide for her future Welfare. All theſe gracious Speeches were accompanied by ſuch Encomiums on her Perſon and Behaviour, as at once convinced *Maria* her Patroneſs was one of the beſt and moſt generous of Women.

In this happy Manſion ſhe continued ſeveral Weeks without Interruption, and by the Charms of her Mind, and the Accompliſhments ſhe was Miſtreſs of, ſo endeared herſelf to the old Lady, that ſhe was never at Reſt when ſhe was out of her Preſence. She became her Aſſociate in her Acts of Benevolence and Charity, in which ſhe employed herſelf with a Satisfaction only reaped by Perſons of her refined and delicate Sentiments. She had yet never been at any Di-

ſtance from her Ladyſhip's, who forbore to take her with her to Church, or elſewhere, till they could be aſſured Lord *Belvidere* was gone from Sir *Thomas Jones*'s, which they could hear of Mr. *Burnet*, who with his Daughter often viſited them, and were the pleaſed Witneſſes of the Happineſs they had procured for *Maria*. All the Servants paid her a profound Reſpect, as well from the great Eſtimation ſhe was held in by their Lady, as her own amiable and winning Behaviour, in which ſhe practiſed a becoming Dignity, accompanied however with ſuch Condeſcenſion, as wonderfully conciliated their Affection.

Lætitia, for ſome Time, ſeemed alſo pleaſed with the Marks of Friendſhip and Conſideration beſtowed by her Aunt on *Maria*, and with the Liberty ſhe now enjoyed, of gadding about to the neighbouring Towns and Villages, without Reproof: *Maria* had nothing in her Temper that could give Umbrage to any one; but her ſerious Turn, her unaffected Piety, and the Solidity of her Diſcourſe, were as little reliſhed by *Lætitia*, as her Aunt's Maxims and Documents; ſo that ſhe often told her, they ſeemed born for each other, and it was a Pity they ſhould be interrupted. However, the manifeſt Superiority *Maria* had over her, both in Perſon, and the Accompliſhments that Education beſtows, ſometimes raiſed Envy in her Breaſt; eſpecially when her Aunt, without Reſerve, as ſhe often did, took Notice of it,

it, which always gave *Maria* equal Pain. When ſhe read to the old Lady, her Manner fixed her into ſilent Attention at the delightful Harmony of her Voice, and the Depth and Solidity of her Remarks. Upon her Harpſichord ſhe ſoothed the very Soul of her Benefactreſs with ſofteſt Melody. In ſhort, her Gratitude for the Favours daily beſtowed upon her, made her ſo aſſiduouſly watch every Opportunity of obliging, that it was not ſurpriſing ſhe was repaid with all the Marks of ſincere and lively Eſteem. She had Clothes of the fineſt Fabric provided for her in Profuſion; many Preſents of Jewels and Laces had been made her; and, in fact, ſhe now appeared in a Manner even ſuperior to that from which ſhe had been degraded by Lord *Beaumont*. Her Lady hid nothing from her; made her Miſtreſs of all her Concerns, and conſulted with her before ſhe executed any Buſineſs of Importance.

Lady *Latimer* was the only Daughter of a Noble Peer, who died without Heirs Male; and therefore poſſeſſed all his Fortune: She had been married young to Sir *George Latimer*, a Gentleman conſpicuous for his good Qualities; and they were a remarkably happy Couple. By him ſhe had two Sons and a Daughter; one Son and the Daughter died in Infancy; the other grew to Man's Eſtate, but died of the Small-Pox at the Univerſity; and the very ſame Year, Sir *George* was killed by a Fall from his Horſe.

Though her Ladyſhip was then not more than Forty, and had lived in the gay World; theſe terrible Strokes of Providence determined her to quit *London* for ever, and all its Delights. She retired to this Seat, which was an Appendage of her large Dowry, where ſhe had reſided, now, for near ſixteeen Years, exerciſed in a conſtant Courſe of beſtowing Happineſs on all around her. Her Misfortunes had impreſſed a Gloom upon her Mind, which inclined her to ſtrict Severity of Manners, and had given her a Turn to ſerious Matters, particularly relative to the Duties of Religion. Here ſhe carried Things rather too far, the general Fault of Melancholy, and Depreſſion of Spirits. She was not contented to believe, and to practiſe, the Doctrine and Duties preſcribed by the New Teſtament; but ſuperadded many Whimſies, which, when too tenaciouſly held, deſtroy the Mildneſs of the Chriſtian Temper, and produce a Maze of Doubt, Perplexity, and Deſpair. The induſtrious Diſciples of a new Sect of Enthuſiaſts had found Means to lay hold of her Conſcience: She was in perpetual Throes, with the Pangs of the New-birth, was wreſtling with Satan with all her Might, and preſſing forwards to a State of ſinleſs Perfection. However, ſhe was ſtill the excellent Woman, and the ſincere Chriſtian.

As to her Perſon, it had not only been genteel, but lovely. Years had now, indeed, furrowed her Face; but the beautiful Symmetry

metry of her Figure remained. Her Eyes had loſt little of their native Fire; and as to her Health, by a long Habit of Regularity and Temperance, it ſeemed eſtabliſhed upon a good Foundation. She had few Relations, and thoſe too opulent to need her Aſſiſtance: *Lætitia*, if ſhe behaved prudently, might promiſe herſelf to be the Heireſs of all the Fortune ſhe could beſtow; though it was ſuppoſed public Charities, and Legacies to the Poor, would carry away many Thouſands.

Maria, who had no ſordid Notions, acted from no Views of future Intereſt; ſhe loved her Patroneſs, prayed ſincerely for the Continuance of her Life and Favour, and had here fixed the *Ne plus ultra* of all her Adventures.

At length, however, the Calm ſhe enjoyed was to be ſucceeded by a Storm, and from a Quarter ſhe little apprehended, and, but for the Goodneſs and Diſcernment of her Lady, might have overwhelmed her.

Lætitia had carried herſelf with much Civility towards *Maria* hitherto, as her Reſidence with her Aunt gave her ſo many Opportunities of going abroad; but in her Mind deſpiſed her for the Uncertainty who ſhe was, having heard her Story before ſhe came, (which there was no Poſſibility for the Gentlemen who introduced her to avoid) and looking upon her as ſupported through Charity; conſequently ſhe caſt an evil Eye on what her Aunt beſtowed upon her more than neceſſary Food and Raiment, was jealous at the

the many Praiſes ſhe laviſhed on her, and inly chagrined at her acting and talking ſo differently from herſelf, and from being ſo ſuperior to her in every Accompliſhment.

Maria was too diſcerning for this Alteration in the young Lady to eſcape her Notice, and ſhe doubled her Diligence to preſerve not only her's, but the good Opinion of her Aunt. She declined any Competition with her, and even ſtudiouſly avoided the Diſplay of many of her Qualifications, to prevent *Lætitia* from taking Umbrage at her. But nothing was ſufficient to regain her Favour, and ſhe began to treat her with perfect Rudeneſs.

Her Aunt perceived how ſhe ſtood affected; but as her Temper was never very conformable to her's, and as ſhe had ſeveral Times been the Cauſe of Diſſention in her Family, ſhe armed herſelf againſt being biaſſed by her; nor did any of her Inſinuations againſt *Maria* meet with the leaſt Countenance. "Tell me not," ſhe would ſay to her, "of the Obſcurity of *Maria*'s "Birth; it is ſufficient that her Merit is a "Recommendation to the higheſt Station: "I adviſe, nay, I command you to take "Pattern by her; you will find what an "Effect it will have in your Favour, as "long as you live. Oh! *Lætitia*, that Spi-"rit of Envy and Detraction, ſo predo-"minant in you, is a deviliſh Spirit, and "ſhould by all means be curbed: How-"ever, I proteſt to you, I will never aban-"don her, nor ſhall your malevolent Inſi-

"nuations

"nuations lower her in my Eſtimation. "How happy would it have been for me "could I have boaſted ſuch a Daughter!"

Theſe and ſuch like Rebukes only ſerved to heighten her Averſion. However, ſhe reſolved not to ſuffer the Torment of beholding her often: She revived all her Acquaintance in the Neighbourhood, and had lately been ſeveral Times to viſit old Lady *Jones*; not becauſe that Lady's Company was agreeable to her, but as it afforded her an Opportunity of being admired and addreſſed by the Fops and Rakes that accompanied her Son; and another, and the principal View that carried her there, was to ſee Lord *Belvidere*, of whom ſhe had lately heard ſo much, and to lay a Lure for his Heart. There was ſomewhat ſo grand and ſonorous in a Title, as ſhe could not reſiſt, and ſhe reſolved to try if ſhe could make him her Captive. She thought his Purſuit of *Maria* no Obſtacle. Gentlemen, ſhe allowed, might divert themſelves with ſuch Creatures as were nobody's; and if he was a Rake, ſhe liked him the better; it ſhewed Spirit and Courage, and ſhe adopted the old Maxim, *A Rake reformed makes the beſt Huſband*; not imagining, in her ſuperabundant Vanity, that ſuch a Rake muſt have a Foundation of good Senſe, be naturally of a towardly Diſpoſition, and that the Reformer muſt be a Woman of better Talents, and more Prudence, than ever fell

to

to her Share. But when, alas! do any of us ſee our own Defects?

It happened, however, for ſome Time, that ſhe never heard the Name mentioned, or ſaw that Nobleman; and ſhe was too ſubtle to mention him herſelf, as it appeared he had been *incog.* in that Part of the Country, only to purſue his Deſigns againſt *Maria*. He had diſappeared, and no one ſaid a Word about him. As to Sir *Thomas Jones*, ſhe neither thought his Rank or Eſtate equal to her Expectations; but ſhe coquetted with him and his Companions, which, for Want of better Exerciſe, employed ſome of thoſe Hours ſhe wiſhed directed to a better Purpoſe.

But one Evening, as Fortune would have it, returning from Sir *Thomas*'s, a Cavalier on Horſeback, attended by two Livery-Servants, paſſed her Chariot, and, making a low Reverence, approached as if he had an Intention to ſpeak with her; upon which the Coachman, imagining it was an Acquaintance, ſtopped his Horſes. Men of the Town ſeldom require much Time to be introduced to Familiarity with the Fair-Sex, if they will give them the leaſt Opportunity. It was, in fact, the very identical Lord *Belvidere* ſhe had ſo long wiſhed to ſee, who cried, "Forgive me, Madam, if, never "having ſeen a Lady of ſo much Beauty in "this County, I am willing to pay my "Reſpects to her, and to beg the Favour of "her Acquaintance." *Lætitia*, half angry, half

half pleaſed, at his abrupt Rudeneſs, turned her Head aſide, and bid the Servant drive on, who obeyed her, and did ſo at a *Jehu*-Rate, being not above a Mile from, and in View of Lady *Latimer*'s, the Cavalier following till he ſaw where ſhe was ſet down. This was not unobſerved by *Lætitia*; ſhe had made a Conqueſt; he looked like a Gentleman; and it bore the Face of an Adventure, which tickled her Imagination exceedingly; and conſidering the Route he was taking, and the Attendance he had, ſhe at once believed, that it was the Nobleman ſhe had ſo long deſired to ſee.

Lord *Belvidere*'s Perſon was not exceptionable; he was of the middle Size, thin, but well-proportioned, and had naturally an Air of Quality. He had benefited little by Education, but had all the ſmart Small-Talk of the *Beau Monde* at his Fingers Ends. He had an early Acquaintance with the Fair-Sex, and as they had been one of the chief Employments of his unimportant Life, he was well qualified to captivate the gay, modern Dames, to whom his Rank was a ſure Recommendation. He was as fond of Intrigue and Adventure as *Lætitia* could be for her Life, and related what had happened to him as ſoon as he arrived at Sir *Thomas*'s, who cried, "I'll be hang'd if it "was not a Lady who has been juſt viſiting "my good Mamma.---Aye, my Lord, this "Wench will be worth your Purſuit;— "ſhe's a d----'d great Fortune. You have

"loſt

" loſt Scent of *Maria*, and I'm glad you " have happ'd upon one to ſupply her Place. " Purſue her, Man—make her your own " —ſhe'll pay off the Mortgages of your " Father's Eſtates. She's fond of Quality; " nothing under a Lord, I aſſure you,—or " elſe I believe I might have been before- " hand with you. I warrant ye ſhe'll be here " again To-morrow; for her Aunt's ſuch " a d----'d puritanical old B---h, that you " muſt not think of being introduced to " her at home, unleſs you can perſonate a " Parſon, or a Methodiſt Saint."

" Oh! d----n it," returned *Belvidere*, " I can do that, and ſigh, cant and ſnuffle " with the beſt of them.—I'll have a Touch " at her.—Is ſhe devout, prim, and " demure, or a *Bona Roba*, that fears no " Colours, and would take a young Fel- " low into her Arms at the firſt Summons? " —Hoic! hoic!—at her, my Boy;— " down with her at once! ha, *Jones!* " As to that little virtuous B---h, I believe " her Fellow-Angels have taken her up to " Heaven; for we can hear no Tale nor " Tidings of her, from one End of the " County to the other.—I love her, by " G--d, and would have married her long " ago.—I know ſhe's intitled to ſome " Thouſands, if ſhe can ever catch them.— " But mum for that!—and I don't think, " with all her Religion, and Virtue, and " Nonſenſe, but ſhe would have complied; " only, truly, ſhe thought me her Brother—

at

" at leaſt by the Father's Side, which deterred
" her.---It's a d----'d Thing though, after
" being at all this Pains and Charge to get
" her from *Worthy*'s, to loſe her at laſt;---it
" vexes me curſedly:—But that d----'d
" Night at *Holmes*'s I ſhall never forget.
" —Oh! God, the ſoft, ſweet, ſtruggling,
" panting, dying Creature!—Well, I muſt
" think no more of her.—To-morrow,
" you ſay?—Ah! To-morrow—why, I'll
" attack Madam what's her Name,—and
" marry rather than burn,—ha! Sir *Tho-*
" *mas?*—It's Time, or elſe I hear my Bro-
" ther will be before-hand with me:—He
" has got, it ſeems, a Thirty-thouſand-
" Pounder in tow, and is going ſoon to board
" her—Come, let's ſee what I can do for
" the Honour of my Family, and for Poſte-
" rity!—I'll hamper her, and her Aunt
" too, I warrant ye. I'm in high Spirits,
" Sir *Tom*, isn't that a good Omen?

" *Then ſighing, panting, raging to be bleſt,*
" Soft, gently, falling on her yielding
" Breaſt;
" *On that dear Boſom, hovering, bill and play*
" All Day and Night, nay, every Night
" and Day;
" And never follow falſe p--x'd B----s more,
" Or be the Dupe of every louſy W----e.

" There's Poetry for you,---my Boy!---I
" tell you it's all done and over!"

" Bravo,

"Bravo, my Lord," replied Sir *Thomas*, "I fear nothing but your Character;—"that won't do, my Lord, with her Aunt, "I aſſure you!—Why I, whom am not "half ſo wicked, and have kept up Appear-"ances admirably, could never be admitted "into that Holy of Holies, though my "Mother is well acquainted, and often "viſits there: So that what you do muſt "be underhanded;---all Plot,---Strata-"gem,---Contrivance and Diſguiſe.---As "to the Niece, Miſs *Lætitia*, I believe "ſhe's ready for you,---and does not ſeem "to be quite ſo ſqueamiſh as ſhe uſed. I "ſuppoſe, poor Creature, ſhe has been "kept from the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt "of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, ſo "much, that it has a little humbled her "Pride, and abated her Coquetry.---You "muſt take care too not to affront a ſingle "Servant at Lady *Latimer*'s; for if you do, "the whole Neighbourhood would riſe and "knock your Brains out."

Thus the two Debauchees ran on, whilſt *Lætitia*, not doubting ſhe had hit her Mark, was ſtudying her moſt agreeable Dreſs for next Day's Operations, when ſhe reſolved again to call at Lady *Jones*'s. This was a Work of great Difficulty, and took her up till Bed-time before ſhe could pleaſe her Fancy.

The next Day, after Dinner, whilſt her Aunt and *Maria* were employed on a Piece of Embroidery, ſhe ordered the Chariot, and

and ſtepping into it, bid them drive to Lady *Jones*'s; but when ſhe came there, heard ſhe was gone to *Uxbridge*. Sir *Thomas* with great Earneſtneſs preſſed her to alight, telling her he had a Friend with him, and he would be glad if ſhe would honour the Tea-Table with her Company. She readily ſuffered herſelf to be perſuaded, and all her Hopes were gratified when ſhe beheld the ſame Gentleman who had accoſted her the Day before, and had him preſented to her under the Character of Lord *Belvidere*. Sir *Thomas*, after Tea, made an Excuſe to go out, and then his Lordſhip declared his Paſſion, which he proteſted had long inſpired his Soul, though Diffidence and Awe had conſtrained him to keep it ſecret; that he was reſolved to ſpeak to her the Day before, and begged ſhe would pardon his Audacity, which he feared had greatly diſpleaſed her; with a deal to the ſame Purpoſe, which is ſo eaſily ſaid, and often believed with too much Facility.

In ſhort, my Lord's Rank ſo dazzled her, that her Coquetry at once was put to Flight. She had, indeed, been ſo long immured, that ſhe jumped at the firſt Offer, and gave him an Anſwer which could not fail of encouraging his further Addreſſes. No Man could, upon Occaſion, better feign a real Paſſion than *Belvidere*; no one could aſſume a more ſincere Air, when either his Intereſt or the Gratification of his Pleaſure was at ſtake; and *Lætitia*, not without ſome Indignation,

Indignation, recollected how foreign from his Appearance the Calumnies were which *Maria* and her Friends had vented againſt him to her Aunt; which made it impoſſible to think of his viſiting her at home, unleſs the Effects of them were removed. Therefore, upon his aſking the Liberty of waiting upon her home, ſhe was forced to decline it till ſome other Opportunity, promiſing to be again at Lady *Jones*'s in a Day or two, when he alſo promiſed to meet her. They parted, the young Lady full of the Idea of ſoon becoming a Counteſs, (for he had told her his Father was ill) and his Lordſhip as firmly perſuaded he ſhould gain a large Supply of Caſh for the Expences of future Pleaſures, beſides a Wife, which was indeed a Part of the Condition he would much rather have diſpenſed with: But his Wants were preſſing; Foreclоſures were threatened by his Father's Mortgagees, and he knew no other Way to avoid ſuch Extremities.

Lætitia appeared more than ordinarily gay when ſhe arrived at home; her Vanity was flattered, and ſhe fancied ſhe was triumphing in ſome Reſpects over *Maria*; but ſtill ſhe knew not how to make her new Lover agreeable to, nor even to introduce him to her Aunt, on whom ſhe ſo greatly depended to make her Fortune ſuitable to the Rank ſhe was to enjoy; for her own was not above 3000 *l.* and even that ſubjected to the Condition of her marrying with her Aunt's Approbation: So that, fertile as her Brain

was

was in Expedients, ſhe was at a Loſs how to behave. In this Dilemma ſhe frequently forced her Diſcourſe to *Maria* about the Earl of *Beaumont* and his Family; and one Evening, when ſhe had been with Lord *Belvidere* at Lady *Jones*'s, to whom (though they were now contracted by Vows together) ſhe had never dared to mention *Maria*, putting on a reſpectful Air to that Lady, which her Aunt perceived with Pleaſure, ſhe ſaid, "Your Ladyſhip muſt have often had "a Deſire to hear from my dear *Maria*'s "own Lips the Relation of her Sufferings: "I own I have long been curious enough to "deſire the ſame, but was fearful that re-"minding her of them would give her Pain; "but now, Madam, when ſhe is ſo happily "ſettled with you, and her Mind ſome-"what at Eaſe, perhaps ſhe will obligingly "gratify us: Her Misfortunes muſt un-"doubtedly convey ſome Inſtruction to the "Hearer."

She made this Requeſt, as much becauſe ſuch a Narrative might perhaps afford her ſome Hint for her future Management with his Lordſhip and her Aunt, as from the Curioſity natural to her Sex. Lady *Latimer* replied, ſhe had no Curioſity to indulge at the Expence of her Friend; if ſhe could, without reviving her Afflictions, oblige them, ſhe ſhould no doubt receive much Satisfaction, as it would, ſhe was ſure, ſtill more and more diſplay her Goodneſs; "but, if the "contrary, I deſire ſhe may be ever ſilent

"on

" on that Head. I am perfectly ſatisfied, " from Dr. *Howard*'s Teſtimony and her " own amiable Temper, and prudent Be- " haviour, that ſhe deſerves my Affection, " and want to know nothing more."

Maria, with a Look that beamed forth the Feelings of her Heart, anſwered, " Your " Ladyſhip need urge me to nothing that I " think will contribute to your Satisfaction. " It would be as unjuſt as ungrateful to " hide from you any thing relative to the " Child of your Bounty, and I am much " obliged to Miſs *Lætitia* for giving me the " Opportunity of gratifying her Curioſity."

CHAP. XV.

The Adventures of Maria.

" I Muſt begin, my Lady," ſhe continued, whilſt her little Audience were wrapped in ſilent Attention, " with the morti- " fying Confeſſion, that I am a Stranger to " the Authors of my Exiſtence; that I " never experienced paternal Cares or ma- " ternal Fondneſs ſince I can remember any " thing; and from this Source may be de- " rived all my future Troubles: But this " was a Circumſtance but lately revealed to " me, and by a Perſon who had ſhewn me " all the Indulgence of a Parent, which I

" had

" had returned with the dutiful Regards of
" a Child.

" As far back as my Memory can trace
" Events, I was in the Poſſeſſion of a Gen-
" tlewoman at *Douay* in *Flanders*, named
" *Sergiſſon*, who treated me with much
" Diſtinction, always ſaid I was of a good
" Family, as a Proof of which ſhe uſed to
" ſhew a rich Mantle worked moſt exqui-
" ſitely by my Mother, a Cradle-Quilt of
" the ſame, and a Pillow for my Cradle,
" adorned with *Bruſſels* Lace to a very ex-
" traordinary Value: I was then about ſix
" Years of Age. My Foſter-Mother had
" been the Wife of a Colonel in the Army,
" who left her a conſiderable Fortune. She
" had in *England* concealed her Principles,
" which were thoſe of the *Romiſh* Church,
" but after his Death retired to *Beſançon* in
" *France*, her native City, from whence ſhe
" had come to *Douay* to reſide for the Re-
" mainder of her Days, having a Siſter
" married and ſettled in that Place, whom
" ſhe choſe to be near. At *Beſançon* ſhe
" uſed to ſay, I was bequeathed to her
" by a Friend, with 20,000 Livres for my
" Portion, but that I was not a Native of
" *France*. This is all that I ever heard her
" ſay; but ſhe diſcharged the Truſt re-
" poſed in her with the utmoſt Tender-
" neſs and Integrity, and perhaps my real
" Mother could not have manifeſted more
" Affection for me than ſhe did. I was
" bred up in the *Roman* Catholic Religion,

" and

" and at the Age of ten Years was ſent to the " *Engliſh* Nunnery, where I made a Pro- " greſs in the Branches of Education I was " put to, that perfectly charmed my In- " ſtructreſſes. I ſpoke the *French* Language " at this early Age, and the *Engliſh*, as if " both were alike my native Tongues; " could point and embroider with great " Dexterity, and was reckoned a perfect " Prodigy.

" Mrs. *Sergiſſon*, in my eleventh Year, " worn out with that dreadful Diſeaſe, a " Conſumption, found her End approach- " ing, and ſent for me to her Bed-Side. I " remember it, alas! too well;---it was " the firſt Misfortune that I was capable of " feeling.---Excuſe, my Lady, theſe Tears " of Duty and Affection, which I ſhed to " the Memory of ſo good a Woman.

" There was ſitting by her a Lady ſeem- " ingly about her own Age, with a moſt " engaging Countenance, whom methought " I loved at firſt Sight. " Come to me, " my deareſt Child," ſhe faintly ſaid, and, " with all the remaining Strength ſhe had " left, preſſed me to her Boſom, and kiſſed " me with Lips as cold as Ice. " My *Maria*, " you are going to loſe me," ſhe continued; " but the Almighty, I have Confidence, " will be thy Protector, and incline that " Gentlewoman to ſupply my Loſs, and pay " you the ſame Tenderneſs I have ever done. " She is a Woman of Worth and Honour, " and I am ſure will diſcharge the Truſt I

" repoſe

" repoſe in her with the utmoſt Fidelity.
" To her I have made over your little For-
" tune, to which I have added 20,000
" Livres more, and I have alſo put ſome
" Things into her Hands which may be of
" Service to you hereafter.—My Dear,
" don't weep ſo grievouſly;—this is a Debt
" we all muſt pay, 'tis a Tribute from which
" Human Nature can never be exempt.—
" I know you love me, and I have endea-
" voured to deſerve it.—I fondly hoped to
" ſee you ſettled in the World; but Pro-
" vidence thought fit it ſhould be other-
" wiſe, perhaps for wiſe Ends and Pur-
" poſes.—We are bound to believe ſo.
" Remember, my Dear, if you imitate me
" in any thing, if my Example is of any
" Avail, that it be in what, at ſuch a
" dreadful Moment as this, will ſupport
" the Conflict between Death and Nature,
" will ſmooth the gloomy Path from this
" World to another, and a far better. Be
" conſtant in your Piety to God, in your
" Regard to religious Duties, in your Hu-
" manity, Benevolence and Charity to-
" wards your Fellow-Creatures! So, when
" you come to die, you will have Hope in
" your Death, and will be acknowledged
" by your Saviour at the Throne of Grace
" with this joyful Sentence, *Enter thou into*
" *the Joy of the Lord!* Mrs. *Nelſon*, take
" her to you, embrace and love her; ſhe
" is a Legacy of infinite Value, a Firebrand
" plucked out of the Fire:—To God be all

" the Honour and Glory. Love her, be
" tender of her, and in every thing do as I
" have directed you, and God will reward
" you manifold for your Goodneſs, and
" return it to your Childrens Children.
" My dear, dear *Maria*, farewell!"---
" Here her Voice failed her. Mrs. *Nelſon*
" gently forced me from her, and ſoon after
" I was told ſhe was no more.

" It is impoſſible, my Lady, to convey
" to you by Words what my young Heart
" felt upon this Occaſion. Sighs and Tears
" were the ſlighteſt Indications of my Sor-
" row. I pined in ſecret, my very Soul
" was affected, and my Health greatly in-
" jured, by perpetually reflecting upon the
" Loſs I had ſuſtained. All her endearing
" Kindneſſes were perpetually preſented to
" my Mind, and methought it would have
" been more eligible to have departed with
" her to that dreary Manſion where our Sins
" ſhall be atoned, and through which I
" was taught we muſt paſs to Heaven.

" Mrs. *Nelſon* tried all her Arts to con-
" ſole me for my Loſs; and indeed I found
" myſelf no Sufferer by the Change Death
" had made in my Protectreſs. She was
" indeed good and kind, and juſt and up-
" right: But Time alone could give me
" Peace, and comforted me, to which our
" Removal from this now-mournful Spot
" not a little contributed. Mrs. *Nelſon*
" was determined to carry me with her to
" *England*, whence ſome Family-Affairs

" had

" had called her to *Douay*, where her Son
" and a Daughter were placed for their
" Education.

" In company with one Mr. *Aſton*, a *Ro-*
" *miſh* Prieſt, and two or three Ladies, we
" travelled to *Calais*, where we embarked
" for *England*, and without any Accident
" landed at *Dover*.'

" From *Dover* we came to *London*, and
" I was introduced by my new Governeſs
" to her Family, as a young Lady to whom
" ſhe had been appointed Tutoreſs and
" Guardian.

" I found Mrs. *Nelſon* was a Widow,
" and Miſtreſs of a conſiderable Eſtate, and
" that ſhe was related to the *Howards*,
" *Browns*, *Bedingfields*, *Aſtons*, and many
" more of the principal *Roman*-Catholic
" Families; by whom I was much careſſed.
" Her Children, as I obſerved to your
" Ladyſhip, were in *Flanders*; ſo that I
" employed the chief Part of her Attention.

" Never could a Lady be more aſſiduous
" to form a Mind, to give juſt Sentiments
" to any one, though ever ſo near and dear
" to her. I had Maſters for Muſic, Dan-
" cing, Drawing, the *Italian* Language;
" I completed my Knowledge of all Kind
" of Works proper for a Female, and alſo
" learned the Rudiments of Geography and
" other Sciences; during which I was often
" carried to the Theatres, to the Opera,
" and to every Place of polite Entertain-
" ment in Town and Country, when even

" my Education alone coſt more than three
" times the Intereſt of my Fortune.

" I grew in a few Years ſenſible of this,
" and remonſtrated againſt the Continuance
" of ſo much Expence. But I received this
" memorable Anſwer, which is engraved
" upon my Mind, and never will be ef-
" faced, though the dear Lady's Words
" may never come to paſs.

" *Maria*," ſays ſhe, " don't trouble
" yourſelf about Expences; perhaps, if
" you have Juſtice done you, (and one
" Time or other you will) they are but
" a Tythe of what your Parents will la-
" viſh upon you. No, no, my Dear, as
" your good Mrs. *Sergiſſon* ſaid to me,
" it would be hard if you were to ſuffer
" any Inconveniency here, after denying
" you the fond Endearments of your real
" Parents, who were Perſons of Honour
" and Fortune: But they would have bred
" you up in heretical Principles, and your
" poor Soul muſt have been loſt for ever."

" Believe me, my Lady, I was then ſo
" bigoted in my Opinions, that I thought
" of my Parents with Horrour;—had no
" Wiſh to ſee them, unleſs to endeavour
" their Converſion; and bleſſed the Hand
" that had taken me from them, to ſhew
" me the Road to eternal Bliſs.

" Thus my Time paſſed till I arrived to
" the Age of Fifteen, when a ſudden Al-
" teration happened in my Situation.

" Mrs. *Nelſon*, who had unhappily, du-
" ring

" ring this Time, loſt both her Children,
" was determined to retire to the Place
" from whence we came, and to dedicate
" herſelf entirely to Devotion; but in vain
" I entreated, in vain I wept to be taken
" with her. " No, my Dear," ſhe ſaid,
" your Beauty and your Virtue will be of
" more Service in the World, than cloi-
" ſtered up within the Walls of a Convent.
" Sick of the Perils, Toils, and unavoid-
" able Misfortunes of Life; ſtripped by
" Providence of my Huſband and Children,
" I am tired of the World, of myſelf; and
" in ſuch a State of Mind, what can en-
" ſure me Peace and Calm, but a con-
" ſtant Devotion, which will draw me
" nearer and nearer to my Saviour, and atone
" for my numerous Sins and Vanities? But,
" deareſt *Maria*, I differ, you know, from
" many, nay, from the generality of Perſons
" of our Faith: I think we were born for
" active Life, and that we do the moſt
" acceptable Service to God, when we
" perform with Diligence thoſe Offices in
" the World which he has aſſigned us, and
" which are ſo neceſſary to the Well-being
" of Society. Think then, if I can againſt
" this Principle ſeclude you, with an old
" Woman, from whatever Providence has
" deſigned you for. *Maria*, the moſt perni-
" cious Practice in our Church, is the cloi-
" ſtering up ſuch a Multitude of Men and
" Women; which may in Time be the
" Ruin of thoſe Countries where it is moſt

" practiſed, and which indeed ſeem near " approaching to a Period; whereas the " Proteſtant States, who have none of theſe " Inſtitutions, and encourage Population " by every Device, are growing daily more " and more potent, and ſeem to threaten " Extirpation to our Religion itſelf, unleſs " we reform our Lives, and rectify the " Abuſes that are crept into the Church.

" I ſhall retire, but I ſhall appoint a par- " ticular Friend to take care of you and " your Affairs, and am reſolved to add Two " Thouſand Pounds to your Fortune. I " know you will think of me, as long as " you live, with Tenderneſs and Gratitude; " and as for my Part, *Maria*, you will " always have the greateſt Intereſt in my " Prayers, and my warmeſt Wiſhes for your " Welfare."

" When my Benefactreſs's Reſolution was " known to her Friends, her Confeſſor " aimed to get me placed under his Direc- " tion; but ſhe would hear of no ſuch " Thing, and pitched upon Lady *Aſton*, " Firſt Couſin to the Earl of *Beaumont*, for " my Guardian, to whom, I very well re- " member, my Fortune was made over in " Truſt for my Uſe.

" And here let me obſerve, my Lady, " that nothing is made a greater Cloak " for Wickedneſs than Religion. This " Truth, mortifying as it is to all ſincerely- " pious Perſons, is juſtified by every Day's " Experience. Such Perſons exerciſe their

" cloſe-

" close-concealed Arts upon the Good and " Virtuous, who, of all Persons, are the least " suspicious: They have a Thousand Oppor- " tunities for Knavery, which never pre- " sent themselves to the Openly-Vicious and " Prophane. But surely, Hypocrisy in Pro- " fessions of Religion, and Acts of Devo- " tion, must meet with dreadful Punish- " ment hereafter, as it is an immediate In- " sult upon the Divine Being and his Ho- " nour, and includes a Complication of " Impiety, Mockery, and Baseness, that " constitutes it one of the greatest of " Crimes, abstracted from the other Acts " of Wickedness, which it enables the Hy- " pocrite to perpetrate with Impunity, and " to which the Really-devout and Truly- " religious are generally the Prey.

" As soon as my Affairs and her own " were settled, Mrs. *Nelson* departed, and " left me in the utmost Affliction, as she " had exceeded all Mrs. *Sergisson*'s and my " own Hopes, and been truly a Parent: " But I soon had greater Reasons to repent " her Loss, than I could be at that Time " sensible of.

" Lady *Aston* had been a constant Visiter " at our House, and was looked upon as " a great Devotee, and esteemed highly " by Mrs. *Nelson*; but she was a *Roman*- " Catholic from no other Reason, than be- " cause the Confessions and Pardons of our " Church were a temporary and ready Cor- " dial for a Conscience which required

" frequent Anodynes of that Kind. Her " Family were all Proteſtants; but ſhe had " very readily conformed to the Will of " Sir *Tancred*, her Huſband, and embra- " ced the Catholic Faith, even as readily " as ſhe would have put on a new Gown: " She found it a commode Religion for " her, and by practiſing duly the external " Rites of the Church, and keeping her " Vices very private, ſhe had impoſed up- " on Sir *Tancred* ſo far, that at his Death, " which was before I knew her Ladyſhip, " he left her a large Sum over and above " her Jointure of 400 *l. per Annum:* Nay, " her real Character was ſuſpected by no- " body that ever I heard, till woeful Ex- " perience convinced me what Kind of a " Lady I had got into the Hands of.

" Never perhaps was a more refined " Voluptuary than this Lady; ſhe was " delicate and extravagant in all her Plea- " ſures. Few People were admitted to her " Houſe; but thoſe were ſuch as were able " to be at great Expences: About Twenty " in Number, of both Sexes, formed her " Circle, and amongſt them a celebrated " Popiſh Biſhop, who was intruſted with " large Sums by the Party, to beſtow in " ſuch Acts of Charity as would moſt con- " tribute to gain Proſelytes to his Reli- " gion. This Viſiter made her conſtant " Aſſertion very probable, that her Com- " pany conſiſted of a few ſelect Friends, " who met to promote the Intereſt of Reli-

" gion;

" gion; but the chief Buſineſs carried on
" by this Company was that of Gaming,
" which conſtituted the Employment of
" three Nights in the Week. Dinners and
" Suppers at the greateſt Expence, and
" conſiſting of all the rare and far-fetched
" Dainties, Birds, and Fiſhes, were pro-
" vided to pleaſe the Appetite; the richeſt
" Wines were poured out as plenteouſly
" as Water; and I am much deceived if
" Part of her Ladyſhip's Expences were not
" defrayed by her affording Opportunities
" and Conveniencies for the Gratification
" of other Appetites. Her Houſe was ſitua-
" ted near *St. James's*, was very large, and
" yet ſo private as to ſecure all that paſſed
" from outward Obſervation; and there was
" Room ſufficient for every Work of Ini-
" quity to be carried on, without inter-
" fering with each other. She herſelf was,
" at this Time, about Fifty; but her Per-
" ſon was ſtill agreeable, and with a little
" Art ſhe ſupported the Reputation of Forty;
" and her profeſſed Deſign was to lay out
" the reſt of her Life in every Gratification
" that the moſt libidinous Inclination could
" ſuggeſt, and at the ſame Time to preſerve
" a Reputation for Sanctity and ſevere Man-
" ners.

" As difficult as it ſhould appear to be
" to ſupport ſuch different and contradic-
" tory Appearances, her Ladyſhip performed
" the Taſk with Eaſe; and though in her
" Houſe, and even Preſence, a Looſe was

" given to every Exceſs a corrupt Mind " and depraved Heart could dictate, no- " body was more frequent at Chapel; no- " body courted ſo much the Friendſhip of " the Clergy; and the Moment after ſhe " had coupled a Pair of Sinners together, " I have known her ſit down with a De- " votee who had called upon her to decide " a Caſe of Conſcience.

" This is a true Picture of Lady *Aſton*; " and I ſoon diſcovered her Hypocriſy, " young as I was, and ſincerely deteſted her.

" I was not immediately carried to this " Sink of Iniquity; for Mrs. *Travers*, ano- " ther Friend of Mrs. *Nelſon*, and who, in " Reality, was what Lady *Aſton* was only " in Appearance, without making a Parade " of her Sanctity, obtained Leave for me to " ſtay with her for a Month or two. She " had always expreſſed a lively Affection for " me, and uſed to call me the *Child of the* " *Faith*, a Title ſhe ſaid I had the greateſt " Claim to. But, at length, I was taken " home by her Ladyſhip, who ſaid, ſhe " could no longer live without me; and " had an Apartment and a Servant to wait " upon me, remote from the Scenes of her " Pleaſures, which ſhe thought not proper " ſuddenly to make me a Spectator of. One " Mr. *Kelly*, who was my Director, was " the only Perſon admitted to ſee me, who " kept alive my religious Sentiments by " his Exhortations and Inſtructions, and " was zealouſly attached to my Intereſt.

" I was

" I was denied no Liberty, walked frequently in the Park, and was carried by " her Ladyſhip to Court, and to every fa- " ſhionable Place of Entertainment; but " my Temper, naturally grave and ſerious, " made me regret the ſtill and private Life " I had been uſed to; and theſe Diverſions " ſerved to make me acquainted with the " World, without depraving my Heart. " Books and my Needle employed every " Hour I could call my own, and I was " in vain rallied and ſcolded for my little " Attention to what has generally ſo many " Charms for young People of my Sex and " Age.

" The Earl of *Beaumont* had ſeen me ſeveral " Times, and ſhewed me ſo many Marks " of Reſpect, that I conſidered him as my " Friend, notwithſtanding the Difference " of our Faith; and his Relation to Lady " *Aſton* gave him a thouſand Opportunities " to ſee and oblige me: But I have Reaſon " to think his Behaviour flowed from a " Scheme that was even then in Agita- " tion.

" I had frequently talked to her Ladyſhip " of my Uncertainty with Regard to my " Parents; and natural Affection continually " agitated my Mind, and impreſſed a long- " ing Deſire to be made acquainted with " the Authors of my Being. This Incli- " nation was ſtill more and more predomi- " nant, when I diſcovered her Ladyſhip's " Manner of Life, which ſhe no longer

" could

" could conceal from me. But ſhe in-
" formed me, ſhe knew nothing at all of
" them, and that Mrs. *Nelſon* was as igno-
" rant in that Point as herſelf. She owned
" ſhe had the Mantle, the Pillow, and the
" Quilt, which ſhe was informed were
" worked by my Mother, which were the
" only Tokens by which ſuch a Diſcovery
" could be made; but as my Parents were
" without the Pale of the Church, it was
" hazarding my Salvation to aim at ſuch
" a Diſcovery, and her Conſcience would
" not permit her to attempt it.

" Not ſatisfied, I reſolved to write to
" Mrs. *Nelſon*, who ſent me a very affec-
" tionate Anſwer, in which ſhe aſſured me
" ſhe could not ſatisfy me; for that Mrs.
" *Sergiſſon* herſelf had been totally unac-
" quainted with the Circumſtances of my
" Birth or Parentage, having received me
" from the Hands of a dying Friend at *Be-*
" *ſançon*, who only thought proper to ac-
" quaint her I was born in *England*, of
" Parents of Wealth and Family, and that
" ſhe had taken me from the Sink of He-
" reſy, to breed me up in the true Faith.
" She concluded by an Exhortation to be
" conſtant in my Religion, and in my Ad-
" dreſſes to God, the common Parent of
" Mankind, who would, ſhe was ſure, by
" his Bleſſing, compenſate for my Loſs.

" I wrote alſo, not yet ſatisfied, to Mrs.
" *Sergiſſon*'s Siſter, who was ſtill reſident
" at *Douay*: That Gentlewoman, who had

" been

" been extremely fond of me, ſent me the
" following Anſwer.

" My dear MARIA,

" I Am really under the greateſt Affliction
" imaginable that I cannot give you the
" Intelligence you deſire; and am as fear-
" ful that your Anxiety on this Head flows
" from your not being ſo eaſily and happily
" ſituated as you could wiſh, ſince Mrs.
" *Nelſon*'s removing to this Place.

" My Siſter would have yielded to my
" earneſt Deſires of putting you under my
" Care, if my numerous Family of Chil-
" dren had not been a Reaſon with her
" againſt it, as ſhe ſuppoſed (Heaven knows
" with how little Juſtice) I could not have
" afforded you that Attention and Tender-
" neſs which are ſo much your Due; and
" therefore preferred Mrs. *Nelſon*, who in-
" deed nobly juſtified her Choice, and ſtill
" is earneſt with the Divine Being in
" your Favour.

" The Secret of your Parents ſeems,
" unleſs Providence wills otherwiſe, to be
" impenetrable, as my Siſter always pro-
" teſted their Names were never mentioned
" to her. Alas! I muſt think the ſecuring
" Converts to Religion, by breaking through
" the Laws of Society, and counter-acting
" the firſt Principles of Nature, is wrong:
" As a Mother, I muſt at leaſt think ſo,
" even if eternal Salvation were the Con-
" ſequence to the injured Party. Ah!

" *Maria!*

" *Maria!* when I reflect on what your " tender Parents muſt have ſuffered for " your Loſs, it calls up Tears to my Eyes, " and excites all the Compaſſion of my " Nature! The Loſs of ſuch a Child---- " what can compenſate! Perhaps, if already " their Hearts have not yielded to the " Shock, they are now bewailing you with " ineffectual Lamentation.---But fear not, " ſome providential Direction may diſcover " you to each other, which, different as " their Faith is from our's, I ſincerely wiſh. " To merit ſuch a Favour from the Al- " mighty, I make no Doubt, under every " Trial and Difficulty you will preſerve " your Piety, your Virtue, and that Inte- " grity and Purity of Sentiment you ſo early " diſplayed.

I am,
Dear MARIA,
Your moſt affectionate
and tender Friend,
MARIA OUVERBAUCHE."

" Here ended my fruitleſs Attempts: I had " nothing left me, but Reſignation to the " Divine Diſpoſal of Events: However, " I was reſolved, if poſſible, to get out of " Lady *Aſton*'s Hands, who had, notwith- " ſtanding all her affected Indulgence, ex- " cited my Contempt and Deteſtation, to " which an Incident that occurred, more " than any thing contributed.

" A

" A young *Iriſh* Gentleman, Sir *Alex-*
" *ander Fitzgerald*, had ſeen and pretended
" to like my Perſon, and, on that Account,
" had been very aſſiduous in his Viſits to
" her Ladyſhip. As his Fortune was ſaid
" to be conſiderable, he made no Secret of
" his Affection to her, and begged to be
" introduced to me. He had often ſeen
" me, and had officiouſly handed me from
" the Park; and for ſome Weeks I never
" ſtirred out without having him at my
" Heels. His Perſon was not diſagreeable,
" and his Underſtanding ſeemed far from
" deſpiſeable; but my Heart was ſecure
" againſt all his Attacks, and he could
" obtain nothing from me but cool Civi-
" lity, which I thought due to every one.
" In ſhort, he had ſomewhat ſo confident
" and aſſuming in his Manner, and yet ſo
" ſervile, flattering, inſinuating, in his
" Speech, that I could by no means bring
" myſelf to approve of his Addreſſes. But it
" was otherwiſe with Lady *Aſton*: Though
" at her Time of Life one would have
" imagined Love ſhould have no Dominion
" over her, the young *Iriſhman*, whilſt
" pleading for her Intereſt with me, made
" a Conqueſt of her Ladyſhip's Heart,
" which one would imagine had no Room
" for any thing but Drums, Routs, Hur-
" ricanes, and ſuch wretched, but faſhion-
" able Amuſements. She therefore went
" roundly to work, and told him one
" Day, that ſhe wondered how he could

" think

" think of throwing himſelf away upon " ſuch a Girl, whoſe Temper was diſ- " agreeable, though her Perſon was toler- " able, and whoſe little Portion, left her " through Charity, as being a Foundling, " was not a Tythe of what he might rea- " ſonably expect with a Wife: That ſhe " could not be ſo unjuſt to his Family, " as to promote ſuch an Affair: But ſhe " had a Lady in her Eye, (and here ſhe " looked languiſhingly upon him) whoſe " Rank and Fortune were equal to all his " Expectations, and who would think her- " ſelf honoured with his Attachment: That " ſuch Baubles as *Maria* were well enough " for the Amuſement of a vacant Hour; " but in a Wife, Prudence and Experience, " and a large Fortune, ſhould be the prin- " cipal Recommendations.

" The young Baronet, who, like the " generality of his Countrymen, was really " in Purſuit of Fortune, was ſtruck with " Surpriſe at this Declaration; but in a " Minute recollecting himſelf, and weigh- " ing the Difference between an agreeable " Widow with a good Jointure, and, as " he did not doubt, with large Sums be- " ſide, againſt a Foundling and a ſmall " Pittance, determined at once to ſacrifice " his Love to his Intereſt, and returned her " an Anſwer that made her Ladyſhip ſu- " premely happy.

" Your Ladyſhip will wonder how I be- " came acquainted with this Converſation.

"It was one of thoſe kind Providences, "of which I have experienced ſo many. "Mr. *Kelly*, my Director, happened to be "in her Ladyſhip's Library, which was an "adjoining Room to that where this Court-"ſhip was held, and, as he had not Time to "retire before they were ſeated, and heard "my Name mentioned, his Curioſity prompt-"ed him to liſten to what paſſed between his "Countryman and her Ladyſhip upon the "Occaſion. He was, though an *Iriſhman*, "ſupriſed at what he heard, and particularly "nettled at the contemptuous Manner Lady "*Aſton* mentioned me in; for he had a moſt "extraordinary Regard for me, and often "pitied me for being in her Hands.

"Pleaſed as I appeared with the Intelli-"gence he gave me, that I had loſt my "humble Servant, a Spice of natural Fe-"male Vanity roſe uppermoſt in my Breaſt, "and gave ſome Chagrin at the Prefe-"rence given by him to her Ladyſhip; but "this Effort of Pride was momentary, and "ſoon overcome by reflecting upon the "Worthleſſneſs of a Man of ſuch a ſordid "Diſpoſition. Lady *Aſton*'s Expreſſions "called up afreſh all my Grief at the "Uncertainty of my Birth; and I muſt own "I heard, with more Indignation than it "deſerved, the genteel Epithets ſhe was "pleaſed to beſtow upon me.

"Sir *Alexander* and her Ladyſhip were "become inſeparable, and he thought me "now too inconſiderable to merit any Apo-

"logy

" logy for the Change of his Behaviour:
" But her Ladyſhip ſtill kept up Appear-
" ances, and, to my Face, treated me with
" a Regard that only ſerved to make her
" Hypocriſy more diſtaſteful, and deter-
" mined me to uſe every Method to get
" out of her Management.

" For this Purpoſe I applied to Mrs.
" *Travers*, and in order to intereſt her the
" more, for the firſt Time I ever could
" bring myſelf to do ſo, gave her a De-
" tail of her Ladyſhip's Principles and
" Manners, and her ſcandalous, private
" Behaviour. She heard with Aſtoniſh-
" ment, and even many Marks of Incre-
" dulity, my Accuſation; and ſuch an
" Opinion ſhe had of her, that, if Mr.
" *Kelly* had not confirmed its Verity, I be-
" lieve ſhe would have imagined I ſpoke
" from Malice and Reſentment for diſap-
" pointed Love. But when the Prieſt had
" certified the Truth of my Aſſertions,
" ſhe was incenſed againſt her to the laſt
" Degree, and promiſed to propoſe my be-
" ing put under her own Care, which ſhe
" ſuppoſed Lady *Aſton* would more readily
" conſent to, as it was now public that ſhe
" was going to alter her Condition, and
" preſumed that ſhe would leave *England*
" with her new Spouſe. But in this ſhe
" was miſtaken, and I have ſince been fa-
" tally convinced of the Reaſons why ſhe
" denied Mrs. *Travers*'s Requeſt, and in-
" ſiſted upon my being with her till I came

" of

" of Age; not without Menaces of Seve-
" rity and Confinement, if ever I ſpoke
" again to her upon that Head, and gave
" me to underſtand ſhe would not relin-
" quiſh her Truſt till ſhe had ſeen me
" ſettled in the World, agreeable to the
" Injunctions of Mrs. *Nelſon*. Alas! that
" good Woman had paid her Debt to Na-
" ture, and I received the melancholy News
" about the Time I was endeavouring thus
" to procure my Freedom; and that by her
" Will ſhe bequeathed me 6000 *l.* making
" Lady *Aſton* my Truſtee for that, as ſhe
" had done for the other Part of my For-
" tune.

" The Addition to what I before had a
" Title to, gave me rather Pain than Satiſ-
" faction, as I knew the Rapacity of her
" Ladyſhip's Diſpoſition too well to think
" ſhe would eaſily relinquiſh the Manage-
" ment of ſuch a large Sum of Money, and
" conſequently, that my Slavery muſt be of
" ſome Years longer Duration with her,
" and perhaps under the Direction of a
" Man, whom, from the late Experience,
" I deemed capable of any Baſeneſs.

" I was now ſuffered to ſee nobody, but
" my Director; and ſoon after her Lady-
" ſhip became the Wife of the *Iriſh* Baro-
" net, at whoſe Nuptials I was obliged to
" aſſiſt, and which were conducted with a
" Splendour that ſuited both their Tempers.

" I ſuppoſe, neither her Temper nor For-
" tune anſwered her Huſband's Expectations;

" for

" for after the Honey-Moon was over, I " could perceive, notwithſtanding all their " Care to hide it from the Eyes of the World, " that Striſe and Diſſention had ſucceeded " the Endearments of Love. Mr. *Kelly* " confirmed my Obſervation, by aſſuring " me her Ladyſhip was found to be in Debt, " and that even her Jointure was engaged " for the Payment of certain Sums, which " it could not anſwer for three or four " Years to come: That the Baronet had " deceived her alſo, his Eſtate of 1,500 *l.* " *per Annum* being near ſwallowed up " with Mortgages: That they talked of " retiring to *Ireland*, and he feared my " Money would be very inſecure, as well " as my Perſon, in ſuch Hands: There- " fore he adviſed me to impower him to " aſk the Advice of Counſel, as to the " Manner of my Deliverance from her " Ladyſhip. I was perfectly terrified at " this Account of the Situation of Affairs, " and ſoon had Reaſon to make ſtill more " ſerious Reflections thereon.

" Sir *Alexander* had begun to take more " Notice of me than ordinary; would fre- " quently ſteal a Glance at me, when at " Breakfaſt or Dinner, and then ſigh; and " once, in paſſing him, he ſeized my Hand " eagerly, ſqueezed it with ſuch Violence " as I could ſcarce endure, and then preſſ- " ing it to his Boſom, ſaid ſoftly, his Lady " being within Hearing, " Oh! *Maria*, " what have I loſt by my own Folly!"—

" I

" I ſnatched my Hand from him with Diſ-
" dain, ran up to my Apartment, and was
" ſome Moments before I could recover my
" Temper, I was ſo incenſed at his Auda-
" city and Baſeneſs.

" When I informed Mr. *Kelly* of this
" Circumſtance, he ſaid, " Ah! my dear
" Pupil, you are not, happily, acquainted
" with the World enough to diſcern all
" the Villainy that I fear you are expoſed
" to. Your Guardian and her Spouſe,
" I ſuppoſe, have been contemplating with
" greedy Hopes your Fortune, the Poſſeſſion
" of which, by any Means, would reſtore
" their Affairs. I know they have applied
" to all their Friends for Sums of Money,
" without Effect, and muſt ſoon leave this
" Kingdom with Precipitancy and Secrecy,
" equal to a Flight, if not ſoon ſupplied with
" Caſh; for all their Creditors are up in
" Arms, and even clamourous for their Mo-
" ney. I am ſhocked when I ſuſpect ſo black
" a Contrivance between the Huſband and
" Wife, (and yet my Knowledge of the
" Parties makes me ready to preſume it) as
" that of ſeducing you, and making you a
" Prey to Sir *Alexander*, in order to get your
" Conſent to call in your Money, which
" is veſted in the Hands of the *Jeſuits*, and
" to the greateſt Part of which, I find,
" by my Enquiries, Lady *Fitzgerald* has
" a Reverſionary Pretenſion, if you ſhould
" die before you come of Age, by the Will
" of Mrs. *Nelſon*. I tremble to think what

" a

"a Temptation this muſt be for Perſons of "their abandoned Principles.—Your very "Life may be in Danger, as well as your "Virtue. It is therefore my Advice, that "you conſent to my providing you an Aſy-"lum elſewhere, and that you prepare to "quit this bad Houſe; and then, at Lei-"ſure, you will have Opportunity to aſſert "your Right, and call the Law, if neceſ-"ſary, in to your Aid."

"My Horrour was inexpreſſible at this "dreadful Picture he drew of my Situation, "which was indeed warranted by Facts "that were evident to myſelf. "Dear Sir!" "I exclaimed, the Tears running down my "Cheeks, "any where—Take me, Oh! "ſave me from Deſtruction; let me not "be a Prey to Vice, let me not be ex-"poſed to Ruin!—Let me leave the Houſe "directly;—let them take my Fortune.— "I have Hands, and may be able to ſup-"port myſelf by my Induſtry!"—"Calm "yourſelf, Miſs," he placidly returned, "we muſt go cautiouſly to Work, and give "no Suſpicion of our Intentions. Be "aſſured I will never forſake you, and "it ſhall be hard if I do not reſcue you, "and ſave your Fortune too."

"I was too much tranſported with theſe "flattering Promiſes, to be content with "a Return in Words; I knelt to thank "him—I threw my Arms around him— "I called him my Guardian Angel, and,

" as indeed he really was, the only Friend
" I had to confide in.

" The good Man, charmed with theſe
" Marks of my Gratitude, again and again
" promiſed me his Protection and Aſſiſtance;
" and I became quite calm, and waited with
" Patience the Notice for my Flight, taking
" all Opportunities that I could, without
" Suſpicion, to pack up my beſt Clothes
" and other Effects.

" Mean-time, I was denied the Privi-
" lege even of walking in the Garden;
" but as I could form no Pretence not to
" come down Stairs at Meals, I was peſ-
" tered with many Declarations of the Ba-
" ronet's revived Paſſion, which his Lady
" ſeemed ſtudiouſly to give him Leave to
" declare, by going out of the Room and
" leaving us together; which confirmed to
" me the Suggeſtions of Mr. *Kelly*. His De-
" clarations were ſo open, that I could
" not help replying with all the Deteſta-
" tion and Indignation I was fired with,
" and let him know that I ſhould not only
" acquaint his Lady with his baſe Beha-
" viour, but take the firſt Opportunity to
" quit a Houſe where I was expoſed to hear
" Profeſſions ſo odious, and ſo contrary to
" the Reſpect I ſhould be treated with.
" He looked very ſimply at this Declara-
" tion, and for ſeveral Days forbore to men-
" tion the hated Subject; ſo that I began to
" hope my Perſecution would ceaſe du-
" ring the Time of my forced Stay with
" them:

" them: But a new Scheme was hatch-
" ing, which made me more unhappy in
" the Event, than my moſt gloomy Mo-
" ments had repreſented to my Mind.

" Mr. *Kelly* had unfortunately applied in
" my Behalf to a Lady of his Acquaintance,
" who was a familiar Friend of my Pro-
" tectreſs. She heard him with Attention,
" pitied me greatly, and promiſed ſhe would
" afford me an Aſylum at her Houſe; but
" the very Hour afterwards betrayed the
" whole Converſation to the Baronet and
" his Wife.

" This I knew by a Letter, delivered
" me by my Maid, from Mr. *Kelly*, who
" was thereupon diſcharged any further
" Attendance upon me, and I was now left
" in abſolute Deſpair. The next Day,
" her Ladyſhip (and I now ſee through the
" *Fineſſe*) carried me abroad with her in
" her Chariot, gave me more Liberty in
" Appearance, though I was narowly
" watched, and ſeemed ſtudiouſly to con-
" trive every Gratification to wipe off, as
" it ſhould ſeem, the Impreſſion of her for-
" mer ill Uſage. Her Huſband forbore his
" uſual Diſcourſe, and I began to think the
" Knowledge of my Deſign had worked this
" ſudden Alteration; but I kept upon my
" Guard, reſolved to be ready at all Events,
" and, as I knew my Way to Mrs. *Tra-*
" *vers*'s and to Mr. *Kelly*'s Apartments, de-
" termined, if I ſaw any immediate Prepa-
" ration for the Journey to *Ireland*, or any

" thing

" thing elſe ſhould happen, to fly, without " any thing but what I ſhould then have " about me, from this ill-fated Houſe.

" One Day, Lord *Beaumont*, who, as I " before obſerved, always treated me with " great Regard, dined with us, and a moſt " ſuperb Entertainment was provided for " him. I was deſired to dreſs myſelf as " ſumptuouſly as poſſible, and obeyed, with- " out conjecturing at the Motives for that " Requeſt.

" At Dinner, they talked of their ap- " proaching Departure for *Ireland*; when " her Ladyſhip expreſſed her Concern in " what Manner ſhe ſhould diſpoſe of me. " Why," ſays his Lordſhip, " has Miſs " *Maria* no Relations in *England*, who " would be pleaſed with her Society?" add- " ing, with a Sigh, " I ſhould have had a " Daughter of the ſame Age, but was cruelly " deprived of her, to my perpetual Regret " and Torment."

" As I never heard any thing derogatory of " this Nobleman, and thought him a Man " of Honour, and as, ſince the Marriage, he " had leſs frequently viſited his Relation, I " ſuppoſed he was not pleaſed with the " Match. Therefore I had no Suſpicion " that he would join in an Act of Injuſtice " to an abandoned Virgin, who had never " done any thing to offend him; but I " muſt, from later Occurrences, imagine " that he had entered into a Scheme with " them to divide my Fortune, the Moiety

" of which I have Reaſon to think, from " what I now know of his Affairs, was " as agreeable an Acquiſition to him, as it " was to his Couſins. However, I ſhall " not trouble you, my Lady, with my " Conjectures; but leave you, from the " Sequel, to judge yourſelf, when, I make " no Doubt, you will be of my Opinion.

" My Lord," replied her Ladyſhip, riſing " from her Seat, with an Action of the " greateſt Surpriſe imaginable, " what you " ſay aſtoniſhes me! I do not recollect " you ever had a Daughter.—What can you " mean?"

" Your Ladyſhip was abroad when I " firſt married, and I had no Correſpondence " with your Family; which might be the " Reaſon of your being unacquainted with " a Circumſtance too diſagreeable to re- " count, and which continued Grief on " Account of, coſt my Counteſs her Life."

" He then, with Tears, (alas! I now know " they were feigned!) related their having " placed their Daughter at Nurſe with a " Perſon of the *Romiſh* Perſuaſion, who diſ- " appeared with the Child; and, after the " moſt ſtrict Search imaginable, they never " heard of them more; and as ſhe was a " Native of *Ireland* ſuppoſed, fearful of the " Child's being taken from her, which " would ſoon have been the Caſe, may have " hid herſelf in her own Country rather " than part from it, having, like the reſt " of her Countrywomen, entertained too

" great

" great an Affection for an Infant nouriſh-
" ed at her Breaſt, not to hazard every
" thing to keep it with her. Her Name
" was *Maria*, and I never heard that young
" Lady (bowing to me) mentioned, but it
" reminded me of my little Darling, who,
" if alive, muſt be about the ſame Age.
" Thence I have entertained the greateſt
" Regard for your Charge, and have on all
" Occaſions ſhewn her every Reſpect in my
" Power.

" Here his Lordſhip concluded, whilſt
" my Mind was agitated with ſtruggling
" Paſſions. I felt a Tenderneſs towards
" this Nobleman, that was inexpreſſible.
" I wiſhed, in my own Mind, that he was
" really my Father, and was ready to throw
" myſelf into his Arms, the Similarity of
" his Daughter's Fate and mine had ſo af-
" fected me. I hoped, and yet dreaded to
" hear any more, and was fearful I ſhould
" not be that happy Daughter he men-
" tioned; though I was half perſuaded he
" was my Parent.

" Were there no Marks, no Tokens,
" by which you ſhould know this long-loſt
" Daughter, my Lord?" returned her Lady-
" ſhip, very gravely, and apparently in much
" Confuſion.

" Alas! I can only reply, my Lady,
" that there was a Profuſion of Ornaments
" beſtowed upon the Infant; and that ſhe
" had a Cradle, and its Appurtenances, of
" exquiſite Work; particularly, a Mantle

" and Quilt, which were worked by her " Mother's own Hands, which I ſhould " know again, if Providence would grant " me the Satisfaction of beholding them; " but undoubtedly they have been long " diſpoſed of; they were too valuable to " be preſerved by a Woman of the Nurſe's " Circumſtances, and perhaps were the " ſooner made away with, to prevent any " future Diſcovery of my Daughter."

" I could hear no more, and without " giving Time to Lady *Fitzgerald* to recover " herſelf from the Wonder that ſeemed to " have ſeized her, I flew with ſuch Quick- " neſs to his Lordſhip, and flung myſelf at " his Feet, that I nearly overſet the Table " that ſtood between us, and ſunk down " in a Swoon, uttering theſe Words, " Oh! Heaven has heard my Prayers!— " My Father!—"

" What paſſed from that Time to my " Revival to Happineſs (as I then thought " it) I cannot inform your Ladyſhip; and it " was ſome Minutes, as I have ſince heard, " when I found myſelf placed upon a " Couch, his Lordſhip fondly holding one " Hand in his, and her Ladyſhip and her " Huſband, apparently much moved, ſtand- " ing over me.

" I ſhall not trouble your Ladyſhip with " the remaining Particulars of this Farce; " ſo, alas! I muſt now call it! in which a " ſincere, a virtuous Maiden, actuated by " every generous and Praiſe-worthy Incli-

" nation,

" nation, ſwelled by every warm and every
" noble Paſſion, was triumphed over, and
" made the Dupe of Cunning and Artifice.
" But let me add, this Triumph was
" gained with Pain by the infernal Crew,
" whoſe Paſſions were really ſo moved by
" my overbearing and touching Senſations,
" that they perſuaded me, all unexperienced
" as I was, they were affected in the ſame
" Manner. Let it ſuffice to acquaint you,
" Madam, that the next Day was a Kind
" of Jubilee: My Lord fetched me to his
" own Houſe with great Ceremony, and
" for the enſuing Week I received the
" Compliments and Congratulations of my
" old Acquaintance, who were all, even
" the good Mr. *Kelly*, impoſed upon, as
" well as myſelf. That good Man ſaid
" every thing he could to prevent my wa-
" vering from the Principles I was edu-
" cated in; and his Lordſhip promiſed him,
" he had ſo much Joy in recovering his
" Daughter, and ſo good an Opinion of her
" Religion from what he had ſeen of her
" Behaviour, that I ſhould not be troubled on
" that Head; and gave him a general Invi-
" tation to his Houſe, which he did not
" long live to comply with.

" Lord *Beaumont* might well make this
" Promiſe; for though he was apparently
" a Proteſtant, I never obſerved he had
" any Regard for Religion at all; and,
" though he had a Domeſtic Chaplain, he
" was never called to exerciſe his Office

" before him, unleſs upon ſome Occaſion, " when Vanity or Parade, or the gaining " a Perſon's Intereſt of a religious Turn " of Mind, made it neceſſary.

" I was now, my Lady, launching out " into high Life indeed; and loth to ſhew " the leaſt Averſion to any thing this dear " recovered Parent propoſed or approved " of, I waſted my Hours in Viſits, and " in Diſſipation. I was attended with the " State of a Lady of my Rank, and every " one ſhewed me a proper and due Reſpect: " As to my Fortune, he aſſured me it was " all made over to him by Lady *Fitzgerald*, " and that he had taken it out of the " Hands of the *Jeſuits*. That Lady went " with her Huſband to *Ireland*, and ſoon " died there.—May all her Crimes be for- " given!—I forgive her ſincerely!—Nor " did the gay Sir *Alexander* long ſurvive her; " he was killed in a Duel by Col. *M'Cart-* " *ney*, upon ſome Diſpute ariſing between " them at a Gaming-Table.

" My thoughtful Temper, however, in a " little Time, returned; I longed for Retire- " ment, and expreſſed my Deſire to go to " one of our Country-Seats; but, from " the many Excuſes his Lordſhip made " from Time to Time, and ſome other " incidental Circumſtances, I had Reaſon " to imagine his Nobility and his Employ- " ment at Court made the chief Part of his " Poſſeſſions. This rather increaſed than de- " tracted from my Affection; but I thought

" it

" it beſt to diſſemble my Knowledge of the
" Situation of his Affairs, which a conſtant
" Levee of air-fed Duns made every Day
" more and more apparent. However, I
" wanted nothing for the Ornament of my
" Perſon, or the Gratification of my Appe-
" tite; and as I ſeldom ſtirred abroad
" without him, or his Son, Lord *Belvidere*,
" to attend me, I could not obtain a Know-
" ledge of what People ſaid or thought of
" me without Doors; and all the Servants
" of the Family paid the Reſpect due to my
" Station.

" Sometimes, however, I was thrown
" into ſtrange Perturbations. My Father,
" I thought, took Liberties with me that
" were very ſtrange in a Parent. He
" was often laviſh in the Commenda-
" tion of my Perſon, made me dance and
" ſing before him, toyed with me in a
" Manner I thought unbecoming, and once
" broke out into this Exclamation, which
" ſeemed to eſcape him unawares.—
" D----n it!---why muſt I be ever pining
" after what I dare not aſk?—Curſe the
" Character I have aſſumed!"—I did not
" much reflect then upon this Sally, but
" ſince have been convinced of its real
" Meaning. He often alſo endeavoured to
" combat my Notions of Virtue and Piety;
" made a Jeſt of my Stiffneſs, as he called
" it, and wiſhed he had been born in thoſe
" Countries where the Natives married their
" neareſt Relations; and argued that there

" was nothing contrary to the Laws of " Nature in Inceſt or Adultery: But, thank " my Creator, my Arguments always con- " founded him; and this fictitious Parent " has trembled and turned pale an hundred " Times through Conviction of their Supe- " riority.

" Meantime, Lord *Belvidere*, his Son, the " true Reſemblance of his Father, acted " much the ſame Part; he alſo pretended " to admire my Perſon, and actually many " Times made Propoſals to me that ſhocked " my very Soul. He argued that our Rela- " tion to each other was not generally " known, and begged I would give my " Conſent to be united by Marriage. But I " dealt more roundly with the Son.—I " told him his Principles and his Propoſals " were infamous, and deſerved the greateſt " Cenſure; and one Day, when he had " thrown himſelf at my Feet, and implo- " red my Pity, he had the Inſolence to " tell me, he was as ſure of me as a Heir- " Loom when his Father died; and then " he knew a Secret that would bring me " to Compliance whether I would or no. " In ſhort, my Lady, my Mind became a " Chaos of Confuſion; I knew not what " to think either of the Father or the Son, " deplored their Depravity with the ſin- " cereſt Tears, and prayed the Almighty to " turn their Hearts.

" One Benefit indeed, and a precious " one it was, I reaped in the midſt of all

" my

" my Perſecutions. The worthy Divine,
" who, with Mr. *Burnet*, recommended me
" to your Ladyſhip, at my Deſire, (for we
" had ſcarce a ſober Perſon in the Family
" beſide himſelf) often afforded me the Plea-
" ſure of his Company: Though a little
" prejudiced at firſt on account of his
" Function, I had Reaſon ſoon to think
" he had a Regard for my eternal as well as
" my temporal Welfare. He would now
" and then, with great Gentility, enter into
" the Diſputes between the Proteſtant and
" the *Romiſh* Church, a Compariſon of their
" Doctrines, and the Conformableneſs or
" Repugnancy of each to thoſe of the *New*
" *Teſtament*. He made me enamoured of
" the Scriptures, enabled me to think for
" myſelf, to diſcern the Abſurdities of the
" Principles and Practices of the *Roman*
" Church, and, to his great Joy, and my
" Benefit, made me a thorough Convert to
" the Church of *England*; and in his Pre-
" ſence, and that of another Clergyman, I
" renounced the Errors of the Church of
" *Rome*, and from his Hands received the
" Sacrament, according to the Rites of our
" Church.

" It was in many private Converſations
" with this Gentleman that I unboſomed
" myſelf, and repeated all the Tranſactions
" of my Life. He appeared aſtoniſhed, but
" I preſume, from a Tenderneſs for my
" Peace, never offered to diſabuſe me in
" regard to my being the Daughter of Lord

" *Beaumont.* Indeed, he went ſo far as to " join with me, that both Father and Son " were Men of no Religion, no Principle, " and wiſhed I could retire, for ſome Time " at leaſt, from a Houſe which was a Sink " of every Vice, even much worſe than " Lady *Aſton*'s; for here no Decorum was " kept up, and even Hypocriſy itſelf was " baniſhed.

" This worthy Clergyman ſoon after, " having a good Living preſented to him, " left the Family, to my very great Regret, " and with him fled all the Happineſs I had " ever enjoyed at his Lordſhip's.

" Lord *Belvidere*, continuing every Day " to importune me with his abominable " Paſſion, I thought it my Duty to acquaint " his Father with it, as I ſaw no End to his " unnatural Solicitations.

" His Father heard me, without expreſſ- " ing the leaſt Horrour at his criminal In- " tentions; but ſpoke of them in Terms " rather of Jealouſy than Diſguſt, and add- " ed, " The Dog ſhall ſmart for it, how- " ever;—an impudent Raſcal, to inter- " fere with the Objects of my Pleaſure!— " He ſhould be looking out for a good " Fortune to retrieve his Eſtate, or, when " I die, he'll be a Lord without a Foot of " Land.—But come, *Maria*, don't mind " it;—let us be before-hand with him;— " come, and kiſs me!"—In ſaying this, " he drew me towards the Settee on which " he ſat, and proceeded to treat me in a

" Manner,

" Manner that threw me almoſt into Mad-
" neſs—I flew from him, all diſhevelled
" as I was,----crying,----" Monſter! is
" this the Treatment you beſtow on your
" Child!---Better I had periſhed before I
" ſaw your Face, than thus to be affronted
" and abuſed!---Death ſhall deliver me
" from my Torment!"---I then burſt open
" the Door, fled to my own Apartment, and
" flung myſelf on a Chair, in a Condition
" your Ladyſhip may better imagine than I
" can deſcribe.

" I had fortunately neither of my Maids
" in the Apartment to be Witneſſes to
" my Condition, which, ſtill willing to
" preſerve the Wretch's Reputation, I was
" very glad of; and that Night I heard
" neither of the Father or the Son; but
" the next Day at Dinner, at which pre-
" tending to be ill, (and indeed I was ſtill
" in great Diſturbance of Mind) I did not
" attend, one of my Women informed
" me there had been a warm Diſpute be-
" tween the Father and Son; that Swords
" were drawn, and my Name was heard
" very often repeated during the Quarrel;
" that the upper Servants had forced in and
" parted them, or, in all Likelihood, Mur-
" der would have been committed.

" I muſt own to your Ladyſhip, this
" News gave me no Diſturbance. I had
" loſt the Reverence and Affection I had
" entertained for them, and had already
" formed ſome Hopes, that, by the Help of

" Dr.

" Dr. *Howard*, whom I reſolved to write to,
" I ſhould be able entirely to leave the
" abandoned Crew. Yet judge, Madam,
" with what Grief of Heart I thought of
" theſe ſuppoſed near Relations: I pitied
" the Depravity of their Minds—I prayed
" a-freſh to Heaven to turn their Hearts,
" though I reſolved, if once I could eſcape,
" never to ſee them more.

" The Hours paſſed away, and Night ap-
" proached; the Uproar, I was told, ſtill con-
" tinued; and I afterwards heard Lord *Bel-
" videre* had been forced to his Chamber and
" confined, at his Father's Command. I
" was at Work, and ruminating at the ſame
" Time over the Misfortunes of my Life,
" when this Intelligence was brought me,
" which made me ſhudder, as I ſuppoſed I
" was the Subject of this Diſpute, when
" Lord *Beaumont*'s Valet told me his Lord
" deſired to ſee me in the Drawing-Room.

" Reluctantly I went, according to his
" Deſire, and found him ſitting alone by
" the Fire, with a Severity of Countenance
" I never before obſerved in him. In a ſullen
" Tone of Voice he cried, " *Maria!* come
" here,—ſit down a Moment, and hear
" what I have to ſay to you. If you an-
" ſwer me as I wiſh you may, you ſecure
" your Fortune for ever; but, on the con-
" trary, the next Moment I will renounce
" you, and turn you out of my Doors."

" I ſat down, in Obedience to his Com-
" mands, and prepared myſelf for the
" worſt.

" worſt. " You muſt know, *Maria*," " he continued, " that you are not my " Daughter, nor do I know your Parents. " I loved you from the Time I firſt ſaw " you at Lady *Aſton*'s, and was then re- " ſolved, ſome proper Opportunity, to tell " you ſo. The Manner of your coming " into my Poſſeſſion you very well know. " —You have now no one but me to " depend on:—Nor can you demand a " Shilling of your Fortune.—I offer you " my Bed and my Heart; though you " have grievouſly offended me by concert- " ing Meaſures with Lord *Belvidere* for " a private Marriage with him, which I " heard, juſt Time enough to prevent it, " from a faithful Domeſtic; yet I ſhall " paſs that over. If you cannot be the " Counteſs of *Beaumont*, you ſhall enjoy " all her Prerogatives. Think a Moment. " —Ruin hangs over your Head if you " deny: That will confirm the Account I " have heard, and juſtify my Proceedings: " —And, as to my Son, I aſſure you he is " in ſecure Cuſtody:—You cannot expect " any Help from him. Make me, as it is in " your Power, a joyful Lover, and not " an inexorable Judge:—You who have " had the Audacity to draw the eldeſt Son " of a noble Family from his Duty, and " to form Deſigns deſtructive to his Honour " and his Happineſs."

" Mingled Rage and Deſpair for ſome " Moments prevented my returning an

" Anſwer

" Anſwer to this baſe and villainous Ha-
" rangue: At length, collecting all my
" Firmneſs of Mind, I made, as near as I
" can remember, the following Reply:
" My Lord, how I have been robbed,—
" how moſt vilely deceived by you and
" the unworthy Lady deceaſed, your Rela-
" tion, I need not recount. If there re-
" mains the leaſt Spark of Honour or Ge-
" neroſity in your Boſom, you will endea-
" vour to make me amends for it, at leaſt,
" you will ſend me away in as good a Con-
" dition as you received me.—As I am not
" now to look upon you as a Parent,---
" (bluſh, ungenerous Man, at your ſhame-
" ful Propoſal, after the Pretenſions you
" raiſed me to)---you may aſſure yourſelf
" I will not remain here in any other
" Character.---Your infamous Offer I re-
" ject with the Abhorrence it deſerves,
" whatever is the Conſequence:---But as
" to what you hint of my conſpiring with
" Lord *Belvidere*, I look upon it to be a
" Contrivance of his or yours to juſtify,
" in ſome Meaſure, to your Family, the
" Treatment you are going to ſhew me.
" No, my Lord, the Woman that was
" aſhamed of ſo wicked a Wretch, as a
" Brother, would not, it muſt be believed,
" think of him for a Huſband. I deſire
" no greater Favour than Liberty to retire
" from your Family; a Liberty, I hope,
" that will not be denied me; and that I

" may

"may take, at leaſt, the Clothes and Linen "I brought with me."

"I cannot deſcribe to your Ladyſhip the "ferocious Aſpect Lord *Beaumont* aſſumed, "whilſt I was thus ſpeaking: He rolled his "Eyes, he bit his Lip, he ſtamped, he "ſwore, put his Hand two or three Times "to his Sword, and I really expected to "be murdered before I was ſuffered to quit "the Room. After ſome Moments dia-"bolical Ejaculations, invoking Damna-"tion upon himſelf, upon me, and all "the World, he roared out,---"You "have then, Madam, made your Choice. "---You ſhall have it.---This Moment--- "juſt as you are---without exchanging a "Word with any one---ſhall you be turn-"ed out of theſe Doors!---You will have "Time to ſee your Folly, and ſupplicate "for what you now refuſe."

"He then rang the Bell, and his Valet "came into the Room.---"Turn this Slut "this Minute out of my Houſe!---If any "Servant gives her the leaſt Aſſiſtance or "Relief, that Minute I will not only diſ-"charge, but chaſtiſe them ſeverely."

"The Valet ſtood trembling, if poſſible, "more than I did myſelf, and repeated two "or three Times,---"Out of Doors, "my Lord!---out of Doors!"---"Yes "Dolt, Raſcal, out of Doors, I ſay! why "does not the Villain ſtir? Here!"---ring-"ing the Bell with added Fury,---"*Ralph!*

"*William!*

" *William! Thomas!*—where are all the " Scoundrels?"

" Immediately the Hall was full of the " Domeſtics.—They, I ſuppoſe, had heard " the Occaſion of all this Uproar, and " were, to a Man, too well affected to me " to ſtir, without Force, to the Execution " of ſuch an Order. They all looked at me " with Trouble and Pity painted on their " Countenances.—The Maids cried, and " even ſobbed.—The Butler opening the " Door, and looking out, ſaid, " My " Lord it rains." Another ſaid it was " dark; a third, it was very cold; " poor " Lady! how can ſhe bear it?" and all in " different Manners indicated their Reluc- " tance to obey his harſh Command.

" This Oppoſition worked him up to a " perfect Devil: He foamed at the Mouth, " was going to run his Valet through the " Body, and began to fall upon the others " with his Cane; when, after ſuch a Spec- " tacle, thinking Death itſelf preferable to " longer Continuance within his Walls, I " ſaid, (the Tears, which I endeavoured to " reſtrain, ſtreaming down my Cheeks) " My Lord, there needs no Compulſion; " ſuffer only one of the Maids to fetch me " a Hat and Cloak from the Apartment I " lately poſſeſſed, and I leave you. Do " not injure theſe good Creatures, becauſe " they have more Humanity and Compaſ- " ſion than yourſelf." (By this Time my " Cardinal and Hat were put on by one

" of

" of the Maids.) " I leave you, my Lord,
" and I leave you to thoſe future Reflec-
" tions, that muſt, when Reflection is
" ſuffered to intrude, make you the wretch-
" edeſt of Mankind! Thank God, I am
" in a Chriſtian Country, and though I
" am not uſed to the Streets, I hope Heaven
" will protect my injured Innocence!"—
" I waited for no Reply, nor turned my
" Eyes towards him more; nor did I hear
" again his Voice: Perhaps he was too
" much ſtruck with my laſt Sentence to
" reply. I paſſed through two Rows of
" the Servants, who every one, with faul-
" tering Voices, Tears and Sighs, beſtowed
" their Benedictions upon me: Some added,
" Dear Madam, let me attend you.—I
" don't value loſing my Place." Others
" cried, " Oh! the ſweet Creature, could
" any body ever think of ſeeing her treated
" ſo cruelly!" " My good Folks," I re-
" turned, " Heavens bleſs you all: But
" hazard nothing on my Account.—I ſhall
" find ſome Aſylum from the Weather, no
" doubt.—Fare ye well!"—

" I ſoon got into the Street. It was a
" very ſtormy Night indeed, in the Month
" of *November*; and my thin Habit ſoon
" convinced me I ſhould be wet to the Skin,
" if I did not ſoon get ſome friendly Shelter.
" I walked on, unknowing where I went,
" and looking into every Shop, to ſee if the
" Countenance of any Perſon was inviting
" enough to make my Caſe known to them,

" and,

" and, at length, determined to enquire my " Way to Mrs. *Travers*'s, who, I knew, " ſtill reſided in the ſame Place. Every " Perſon that paſſed me made me tremble, " and I feared to be inſulted. But a Storm " of Wind came on, accompanied with a " driving Rain, which increaſed to ſuch a " Degree, that I was obliged to ſtand up " under the firſt Gateway I came to, and " retired to the fartheſt Part of it, to avoid " the Obſervation of Paſſengers, reſolved " to ſtay there till the Storm ceaſed. But " as I could not refrain ſome Sighs, which " involuntarily eſcaped me, they were over- " heard by a Gentleman who had taken " Shelter, with his Servant, in the ſame " Place, whom I had not before taken No- " tice of, my Thoughts were ſo full of my " own Misfortunes."

The lovely Creature then gave her Ladyſhip an Account of her being ſuccoured by Mr. *Worthy*; his noble and generous Treatment of her; the Motives (with great Tenderneſs of Expreſſion of Mrs. *Worthy*) of her leaving that Family, with her conſequent Adventures, till ſhe was brought to Mrs. *Holmes*'s; (what happened there her Ladyſhip had before been acquainted with) and concluded thus:

" Your Ladyſhip will now do me the " Juſtice, I hope, to obſerve (and I have " not varied one Tittle from the Truth) " that though I have met with many Miſ-

" fortunes,

" fortunes, they have not been produced
" by any Miſconduct of my own; unleſs
" I was too eaſily impoſed upon, which
" cauſed me to leave Mr. *Worthy*'s; but
" then my Motives were generous and diſin-
" tereſted, by what Means ſoever they were
" excited. At Lady *Aſton*'s I preſerved my-
" ſelf untainted; and if at Lord *Beaumont*'s
" I fell too much into the faſhionable A-
" muſements of the gay World, it was to
" oblige, as I ſuppoſed him, a Father; and
" I hope my latter Conduct to the unwor-
" thy Father and Son will not be accounted
" wrong. Your Ladyſhip will make ſome
" Reflection upon my unfortunate Story,
" ſuch as the following: An Infant, with-
" out any Fault of its own, is deprived of
" its Parents, bred up in an idolatrous and
" cruel Belief; afterwards has a conſider-
" able Fortune left her; is ſhifted from
" Hand to Hand, cruelly treated, deprived
" of that Fortune, and turned out to be an
" Alien and Wanderer. Who will dare to
" diſpute the Divine Diſpenſation of Good
" and Evil in this Life, when the Inno-
" cent ſometimes ſuffer with the Guilty, and
" many Ends and Views of Providence are
" anſwered thereby, though our finite Un-
" derſtandings cannot trace them out? But
" then, my Lady, to moderate my Suffer-
" ings, I have met with a Mrs. *Sergiſſon*,
" a Mrs. *Nelſon*, a Dr. *Howard*, a Mr.
" *Worthy*, a *Lucy Holmes*, a Mr. *Burnet*,
" and a Lady *Latimer*, who have been

" Inſtruments,

" Inſtruments, in the Hands of that Provi-
" dence, to ſave me from Diſtreſs and Ruin.
" I have alſo been happily reclaimed from a
" falſe and pernicious Belief, to the pure
" Light of the Goſpel, and to that univer-
" ſal Love and Charity, and that exalted
" Hope it inſpires.

" Great Reaſon have I then to rejoice;
" and your Ladyſhip's Favour and Protec-
" tion, the generous Manner in which you
" have treated an abandoned Maid, with-
" out Parents, Relations, or Friends, is ſuch
" an Inſtance of the Goodneſs of the Divine
" Being, as muſt call for my moſt grateful
" and humble Acknwledgments. It was
" God, my Lady, that inſpired you with
" Compaſſion, that has conciliated your
" Affections to me; and He, I hope, will
" enable me, by a conſtant Temper of Gra-
" titude and Humility, by an aſſiduous Obe-
" dience to all your Commands, and by a
" perpetual and ſincere Love and Reve-
" rence, to return, in ſome Meaſure, your
" exalted Kindneſs and Benevolence."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

A whole Family made happy.---Their Gratitude.---A Marriage.---A happy Couple.---Juſt Sentiments.

LADY *Latimer*, who had ſympathiſed with the lovely *Maria* throughout her affecting Relation of her Adventures, and whoſe Tears had flowed as plentifully as her own, at this Concluſion, roſe, and claſped her fondly to her Boſom, exclaiming, "My "dear, my grateful, my all-accompliſhed, "my perſecuted, my pious Child! in re-"lieving you I have conferred the greateſt "Favour upon myſelf; my Pleaſure is ſu-"perior to your own, and I hope thereby I "have drawn down the Bleſſings of Heaven "upon my Family. Thou ſhalt no more "lament the Loſs of a Mother; from hence-"forth look upon me as ſuſtaining that en-"dearing Character. My Fortune, my Fa-"mily, are all at thy Service; and if he was "in Circumſtances to warrant it, that unwor-"thy Nobleman ſhould be compelled, in a "Court of Equity, to do thee Juſtice. But "of this hereafter. Your Story has raiſed "many Thoughts in my Mind. I have a "Relation, a moſt excellent Woman, whom "I have not ſeen for ſome Years, that ſhall "hear thy Hiſtory. She has long mourned "the Loſs of a Daughter; and from the

" Circumſtances you have given us, I could " almoſt be aſſured ſhe is thy Mother. If " ſo, what ſupreme Felicity ſhall I beſtow " upon you both! Be it as it will, however, " I will invite her to my Seat, that I may " be a Witneſs of the powerful Workings " of Nature, quite different from the fictitious Diſplays of it in a Lord *Beaumont!* " ---Thy Virtue, aided and ſupported by " that unſeen Power, who governs human " Affairs, has indeed triumphed over ſuch " Evils, ſuch Perſecutions, ſuch Temptations, as none but a Soul like thy own " could ſupport. Come to my Arms once " more, and believe I have more Joy in thee " than Words can expreſs; and that my " Love will ever be the ſame!"

Maria returned, with a Heart full of Gratitude, theſe moſt kind Expreſſions and Aſſurances; her Satisfaction was complete, and ſhe alternately bleſſed Heaven, and thanked her Benefactreſs.

Lætitia was extremely affected: She too had ſhed Tears; ſhe too, in her Turn, embraced and felicitated the charming Maid: All her Envy, and the native Malignity of her Temper, ſubſided. She deteſted, or thought ſhe deteſted, Lord *Belvidere*, and at once reſolved to break all Connection with ſo dangerous, ſo bad a Man. But, like Perſons of that Stamp, her Grief and her Reſolutions were but momentary, and Vanity ſoon got the Aſcendant in her little Mind.

The

The next Day, Lady *Latimer*, as ſhe had promiſed, wrote to her Friend, telling her ſhe deſired to ſee her and her Spouſe with all Speed, upon Buſineſs that greatly concerned them and herſelf.

Upon *Maria*'s Recommendation, and to give her Satisfaction, but without acquainting her with her Intention, ſhe ſent privately for Mr. *Holmes*, and deſired he would bring his Son and Daughter with him: They came over the next Morning, and were introduced to her Ladyſhip before *Maria* had left her Chamber.

"My Friend," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "I "am glad to ſee you. I have heard ſuch a "Character of you and your Family as "will inſure you my Friendſhip. Come "here, my Dear," ſhe continued turning to *Lucy*; "upon my Word you are an ami-"able Maid. I ſuppoſe you remember "Miſs *Maria?*" At the Mention of that Name *Lucy* made a low Courteſy, her Cheeks glowing with Bluſhes, and her Eyes ſparkling with Joy; and anſwered, "Yes, "Madam, I ſhall never forget her:—I "love her dearly."-----"Thou doſt, my "Dear? Well, what think you if I beg "you of your Father and Mother to attend "upon that young Lady?" "I hope, Ma-"dam," ſhe replied, "they will think me "greatly honoured. I don't care what I "do, or what Situation you pleaſe to put me "in, ſo I have the Happineſs of ſeeing my "dear Friend."—"Well then, *Lucy*, hence-

"forth

" forth I take upon me to make your For-
" tune, and you ſhall live conſtantly with
" *Maria*, if your Father conſents." " Yes,
" my Lady," anſwered the Father eagerly,
" I am proud of the Honour;----take her,
" ---do with her as you pleaſe."---" I thank
" you, Mr. *Holmes*, for your Acquieſcence
" with my Deſire. *Lucy*'s Virtue and Good-
" neſs have been the Means of my gaining
" a Treaſure, and ſhe ſhall ſhare it with
" me. But---here's your Son, honeſt *Ro-*
" *ger*; he ſerved my *Maria* too, and he
" muſt be conſidered." *Roger* bowed to the Ground, and by wriggling to and fro', and rubbing his Hands, teſtified his Delight. " How old are you, my young Friend?" " Twenty-ſeven laſt Graſs, an't pleaſe you,
" my Lady." " And pray, *Roger*, have you
" ever been in Love?"---At this Queſtion *Roger* turn'd pale---then bluſh'd, and look'd down upon the Ground, and was ſilent; upon which his Father took upon himſelf to ſpeak for him. " Pleaſe you, my Lady, the Lad,
" I believe, has had a ſneaking Kindneſs for
" *Dolly Simper*; and ſhe, I fancy, returned
" it; but alas! my Lady, Neighbour *Sim-*
" *per* is a powerful Man, and I have no
" Opportunity of ſettling *Roger* in a good
" Farm. If I had, I'll venture to ſay, he
" would have no Objection to him. *Roger*,
" though I ſay it that ſhould not ſay it,
" is a good towardly Lad, and has as warm
" a Heart as any Man in the Pariſh. But
" pleaſe you, my Lady, I have had great

" Loſſes,

"Losses, and have not been able to settle "him as I could wish."---"Poor Man!" returned her Ladyship, "I tell you what: "I want a Tenant for *Berry* Farm; I "believe it is very improveable. I'll let "*Roger* a long Lease of it, and at the old "Rent; and I'll stock it for him into the "Bargain, and give him an Hundred Pounds "in his Pocket. Do you think that will "gain *Dolly Simper*?"---*Roger* had almost forgot himself, and was going to jump for Joy, and cried out, "Oh! my Lady, "---you'll make me so happy!---I'll work "like a Horse, to shew myself thankful— "I will indeed!"—The Father, not less affected, though he expressed it in another Manner, perfectly wept, and kneeling down, prayed God to reward and bless so good a Lady. "Well, go all home, and come "to Dinner with me To-morrow;—bring "your Wife with you too; and my Attorney "shall be sent for over also to take Instruc- "tions about the Leases. And here, Mr. "*Holmes*, here is a small Matter for you, "as a Recompence for my *Maria*'s Board "and Lodging, when she was with you." Upon this, she gave him Twenty Guineas, which he received with such Expressions of his Gratitude, as were perfectly painful to her Ladyship. They were all going out of the Room, when *Lucy* seemed to put on a grave Countenance, and was ready to burst into Tears.---"Come, I'll lay you a Penny, "*Lucy*," says her Ladyship, who observed

her with Pleaſure, "that I can gueſs why "you are ſo dull. You have not ſeen your "Friend.---Isn't that it?"---*Lucy* bluſhed and courteſy'd. "Well, well, ſhe'll ſoon "be here: Go all of you into that Room, "and I'll bring her to you," pointing to an inner Apartment.

They obeyed, and, ſoon after, *Maria* entered, and, the uſual Compliments paid, Lady *Latimer* ſaid, "My Dear, you don't know "that a great Misfortune had like to have "happened to your *Lucy?*"---"No, my "Lady, God forbid the gentle Creature "ſhould meet with any; I am ſure her Con-"duct will never bring Misfortunes upon "herſelf."---"I'll tell you," returned her Ladyſhip: "Her Misfortune was, that ſhe "ſhould not ſee you this Morning. Come, "I'll carry you to her." Her Ladyſhip then got up, and taking *Maria* by the Hand, led her to the Room where the happy Family were all ſeated. The firſt Effect of this Sight, upon *Maria*, was the exciting her Gratitude. She turned about to Lady *Latimer* with great Vivacity, and preſſing her Hand, and kiſſing it, exclaimed, "Oh! "my good Lady, how you ſtudy to heap "Favours upon me!" Then running and claſping *Lucy* to her Boſom, ſhe careſſed her in the warmeſt Manner, which was returned by the amiable Maid with equal Senſibility. She ſhook *Roger*'s Hand, ſhewed much Reſpect to the Father, and made particular Enquiries after Mrs. *Holmes*.

"I

"I ſee," ſays her Ladyſhip ſmiling, "that "you will not be diſpleaſed to have *Lucy* "with you, and ſhe herſelf ſeems to deſire "it: Therefore To-morrow ſhe is to come "to attend upon you. I need not tell you, "my Dear, that we muſt take Care of her "future Welfare. Your Friend *Roger*, it "ſeems, is to have *Dolly Simper*, and I am "to put him into Life, where I don't doubt "but he will merit the good Character you "and Mr. *Burnet* have given of him.--- "Have I, my dear *Maria*, been making "you happy this Morning? I am ſure I "have made myſelf ſo. Can there be a "more exalted Pleaſure, than in beſtowing "Favours upon the Worthy and the De-"ſerving; lighting up Smiles of Joy in "the Human Countenance! Heaven has "formed us with good Propenſities: Why "don't we oftener obey them? I promiſe "you, my Dear, no earthly Enjoyment "could give me more true Satisfaction than "I have reaped this Morning; may every "Day afford me Opportunities of honour-"ing my Creator in his earthly Images!"

"My dear Lady," replied *Maria*, "I ſee "all the Goodneſs and Beauty of your Con-"duct: But a Heart like yours *muſt* exert "itſelf thus, and produce ſuch bleſſed Ef-"fects. I ſhould almoſt look upon your "Ladyſhip as a Being ſuperior to Mortals, "exerciſing her Agency in ſhowering Be-"nefits upon Mankind. Indeed a Human "Creature adorned with ſo many Virtues is

" a Bleſſing and an Example to her Fellow-
" Mortals, that muſt have a greater Effect, to
" enamour them of Virtue, than the moſt
" exalted Precepts, though delivered by the
" Tongue of Eloquence itſelf."

Her Ladyſhip ſtopped her from proceeding, and ſhe went down with her old Friends into the Hall, where ſhe bid them farewell, *Lucy* whiſpering her, " Dear Madam, I " ſhall ſee you To-morrow, and, I hope, " never leave you more." *Maria* could ſcarce refrain Tears at the lively Affection ſhewn by this young Creature, and preſſing her again to her Boſom, bid her be ſure to come, with a Smile. As to *Roger*, he had loſt his Tongue, and looked upon *Maria* with a kind of reverential Awe that all her Familiarity could not encourage him to lay aſide. Poor *Holmes* himſelf thought it incumbent upon him to make ſome Apology to *Maria*, before his Departure, for his late Conduct towards her, which he attempted with a confuſed Countenance; but ſhe ſtopped him ſhort, ſaying, " Mr. *Holmes*, " don't mention it; you was impoſed upon, " or you would never have impoſed upon " me. I have had ample Amends made me " for the Inconveniencies I was put to; and " you ſee, through the Goodneſs of your " Children, what Happineſs I enjoy with " this good Lady.---Make Haſte, and bring " my dear *Lucy* to partake of it with me."

Lætitia, who ſoon heard from her Aunt what had paſſed, could with Difficulty conceal

ceal her Indignation.---"You are very "good," she said, "truly, Madam;--- "you support, for what I see, all the Beg- "gars in the County." Though these Words were spoken, as it were, to herself, they were overheard by her Ladyship, who, with a Smile, turning to *Maria*, said, "My "poor *Lætitia* has never met with any Mis- "fortunes but of her own creating; I mean "imaginary ones. I warrant you, my "Dear, and I am sorry to see it, you'd "think yourself better employed in suiting "a Set of Ribbands to your Complexion, "or laying the Plan of a new Fashion, "than in Exercises that raise and warm the "Heart, and dignify our Nature.—Idle "Creature!—Learn to reform your Mind; "—'tis too replete with Trifles, too dissi- "pated, to feel the Effects of such Exam- "ples. I am sorry that you could even "think what you have dared to express."

Lætitia would have excused herself: A Blush, but not of Shame, covered her Face. It was Anger that called it up into her Countenance, and at that Moment she hated her Aunt, *Maria*, and contemned what she heard. Such are the Motions of Minds formed, or rather deformed, like *Lætitia*'s. And notwithstanding all she had heard the Day before, she, after Dinner, went to an Assignation with Lord *Belvidere* at Sir *Thomas Jones*'s.

That abandoned Youth had at length heard where *Maria* was; and though his

Father, he knew, was then lying ill, and in Danger of Death, he was reſolved to ſtay in the Country to purſue his Schemes on *Maria*, though he thought it not expedient to mention her to *Lætitia*, whom he notwithſtanding intended to make his Market of into the Bargain.

For this Purpoſe, after conſulting with his Brother in Iniquity, Sir *Thomas*, he laid a Plan, which he thought could not fail of ſucceeding.

The next Day Mr. *Holmes*, his Wife and Daughter, were punctual to their Appointment, and were entertained with her Ladyſhip's uſual Hoſpitality. Mrs. *Holmes* made many aukward Excuſes to *Maria* for her Behaviour, who ſaid and did all ſhe could to abate her Confuſion. The Attorney took Inſtructions to draw the Leaſes of *Berry* Farm; and young Mr. *Holmes*, as he may now be called, was ſupremely happy. *Lucy* had brought her Clothes, and was given to *Maria* for her Attendant, with whom her Service was likely to be very agreeable; and Lady *Latimer*, the Author of all theſe Bleſſings, exulted in that ſhe had made a worthy Family happy. But this was not all; ſhe had with *Maria* contrived to make that Happineſs complete, by privately ſending for Farmer *Simple*, his Wife and *Dolly*, who were waiting in an adjacent Room, where they alſo had dined, attended by *Lætitia*.

"My Friend *Roger*," ſays Lady *Latimer* after Dinner, "I ſuppoſe you have al-"ready acquainted your dear *Dolly* with "your Proſpect of a Settlement worthy of "her Participation." *Roger* bowed; the Colour went and came in his Cheeks; and, after ſome Heſitation, he replied, he had taken the Liberty to acquaint her of her Ladyſhip's Goodneſs. "And ſuppoſe," continued that Lady, "*Roger*, you were "married forthwith, and kept your Wed-"ding here?" *Roger* ſcratched his Head at this, laughed, and cried with an Eagerneſs attended with a Shrug that was very diverting, "Would to God, an't pleaſe "you, my Lady, it was ſo; but we have "given you Trouble enough already." "Say no more of that," Lady *Latimer* replied, "you deſerve all we have done for "you, and I am much pleaſed with your "Choice. *Dolly* is a good Girl, and will "make an induſtrious, careful Wife. Now, "if *Dolly* were but here, I ſhould like to "ſee the Buſineſs finiſhed, and to ſend you "home Man and Wife."---"I'll not be a "Quarter of an Hour," returned *Roger*, "an't pleaſe your Ladyſhip; I'll fetch her "directly, and her Father;" and was going out of the Room in a great Hurry. "No "Occaſion, *Roger*, no Occaſion for ſuch "Haſte; I can, by a little of my Art, bring "her and her Father here ſooner than you "can, though you were to have the Wings "of Love for your Conveyance." She then

ordered the Servant to open the Door of the Apartment, and there, to the utter Aſtoniſhment of *Roger*, his Father and Mother, and *Lucy*, ſtood Mr. *Simper* and *Dolly*, bluſhing like the Morn, with Mr. *Burnet* and his Daughter, who had been alſo invited, and partook with Tranſport of their Satisfaction. *Roger* ſtood gaping and ſtaring for a Minute or two, and then, without minding any body, ran to his *Dolly*, gave her a Smack that might be heard to the other End of the Room, crying, "If this is my Lady's Art, "by the Lord *Harry* ſhe's the rareſt Gen-"tlewoman in the World." All Parties agreed, the holy Ceremony was performed with edifying Seriouſneſs by Mr. *Burnet*, and the Bride was given away by Lady *Latimer*, who promiſed to preſent her with a hundred Guineas upon the Birth of the firſt Child.

The reſt of the Day was ſpent in decent Mirth and Feſtivity; the Servants, and all the neighbouring Farmers, joined in celebrating the Nuptials of the honeſt Pair. Her Ladyſhip was remarkably chearful, *Maria* and *Lætitia* joined in the Dances in the great Hall, and an elegant and plentiful Repaſt concluded the Day, when all Parties departed, bleſſing her Ladyſhip, and exulting in her Goodneſs and Beneficence.

Lucy, when retired with her dear *Maria*, gave a Looſe to the grateful Senſations that ſwelled her Boſom. "Oh! my deareſt "Lady," ſays ſhe, "I am now arrived to "the

"the Height of Happineſs! In attending "upon you, I ſhall be inſtructed to be as "good as you are, and endeavour to copy "thoſe Excellencies that make you ſo juſtly "admired. Happy Hour, when I firſt be-"held my Friend, my Miſtreſs, the Patroneſs "of my Family. The humbleſt Duty, "the ſincereſt Attachment on my Side, I "hope, will ſecure me that Affection which "will ever be the Pride and the Glory of "my Life."

That *Lucy* could expreſs herſelf ſo well upon moſt Occaſions, was partly the Gift of Nature, and partly owing to the Inſtructions ſhe had received from Mr. *Burnet*, her Godfather, and his Daughter, who had taken great Pains to cultivate her Mind, and had ſupplied her with proper Books, by which ſhe had reaped uncommon Improvement. Theſe Cares, which the better Sort of People, I mean thoſe who are really benevolent, beſtow upon the Children of their poor Neighbours, are of the utmoſt Advantage to Society. In the preſent Caſe, it produced in *Lucy* that Pity, that ſympathetic Softneſs, which was ſo ſerviceable to *Maria*. Simple and uninſtructed Nature, and ruſtic or vulgar Conceptions, ſeldom riſe to ſuch Flights of Good Will and Benevolence to others; they rather diſplay themſelves in Ferocity, unfeeling Barbarity, and a Malevolence of Heart.

Maria received theſe Teſtimonies of *Lucy*'s Gratitude with a heart-felt Pleaſure; ſhe

loved her, not only for the Benefits ſhe had received, and the Ills ſhe had eſcaped thro' her; but for her amiable Temper, the Rectitude of her Sentiments, and that Uniſon of Soul which bound her, as it were, to her with Bands *more ſacred than Nature's brittle Tie.* She ſoon altered her Dreſs; inſtead of ruſtic Weeds, *Lucy* ſhone in Silk and Laces; and Lady *Latimer* and *Maria*, nay, even *Lætitia*, were continually adding ſomewhat to her Wardrobe.

It is proper now, however, that the Scene of our Adventures ſhould be ſhifted into another Part of the Kingdom.

CHAP. XVII.

Lord Beaumont *dangerouſly ill.—Viſited by his Son the Colonel.---His dreadful Situation of Mind.---His Behaviour to Mr.* Worthy, *and Confeſſion of his Guilt.---His Death.*

WE left the Family of the *Worthies* at their Seat in *Berkſhire*, where Col. *Beaumont* had gained all their Affections by his amiable Conduct, and poſſeſſed entirely the Heart of his lovely *Henrietta.*

Theſe excellent Perſons waited only the Return of young *Worthy*, who was every Day expected home from his Travels, to ſolemnize the Nuptials of the virtuous Pair.

And

And as it was thought decent and proper to aſk the Earl of *Beaumont*'s Conſent, or at leaſt to acquaint him with the approaching Marriage of his Son, Mr. *Worthy*, the Colonel, and Mr. *Welldone*, propoſed a Journey to *London* for that Purpoſe; the latter alſo had a particular Affair of his own, which called him to the Metropolis.

At the *Smyrna* they heard his Lordſhip had been very ill for ſome time with his old Diſorder, the Gout; that it had got into his Stomach, and the Phyſicians had declared it baffled all their Art to remove it to the Extremities; ſo that it was daily expected he would die. A Meſſage had been left the Day before, at the Colonel's Lodgings, from his Lordſhip, expreſſing his Deſire of ſeeing him as ſoon as poſſible, and an Expreſs had been diſpatched to Lord *Belvidere*, commanding his Attendance.

Col. *Beaumont* forgot now the many Occaſions of Diſguſt his Father had given him by his unnatural Treatment; and his filial Piety again revived; therefore he left his two Companions at the *Smyrna*, and taking a Chair, was conveyed to his Father's Houſe.

He ſent up his Name, and deſired to know if he might be then admitted to ſee him; a Ceremony which he would have diſpenſed with, but for the Strangeneſs that had ſo long ſubſiſted between them. His Lordſhip, who had juſt got over a violent Paroxyſm, ſent Word down, he ſhould be pleaſed with his Company: Upon this, he was

conducted

conducted to his Apartment, where his Father ſat, bolſtered up in a great Arm-Chair, and ſo waſted and emaciated, that he could ſcarce have known him anywhere elſe. The gay, the diſſolute old Debauchee was now in a Frame of Mind quite foreign to his former Way of thinking.

"My Son," he ſaid in a hollow Voice, as the Colonel approached him,—"you are very "good to let me ſee you:—Indeed, I have "not deſerved your Conſideration. I am "going to quit this Stage:—God, whom "I have ſo abuſed, only knows what will "be my Portion in the next. I hope, "*Charles*, you will forgive me for my "Uſage of you, and, alas! for my too "barbarous Treatment of your Mother— "now a Saint in Heaven. But why do I "mention Heaven!—I have no Title to "its Notice, I have long forfeited the "moſt diſtant Hope of Happineſs hereafter! "—Oh! dreadful End of all my Air-"built, voluptuous Projects!—— Oh! "*Charles!* 'tis not the gay, the reprobate "Lord *Beaumont*, who ſtuck at nothing to "gratify his Paſſions,—who thought Rank "and Wealth only uſeful as it enlarged "the Capacity for Pleaſure,—who dared "in his Heart to queſtion the very Exiſt-"ence of a Supreme Being, a governing "Power, and ſet all his Laws at Defiance. "—No—you behold a Wretch weaken-"ed by Diſeaſe, torn by the Pangs of a "guilty Conſcience, and trembling, and "aghaſt,

" aghaſt, at the Approach of his laſt Hour. " Better were it to be d—'d at once, than " to exiſt in ſuch Torment longer, both in " Body and Mind!"

The Colonel took his Hand, and kiſſing it, ſaid, " My Lord, I come full of that " Duty and Reverence which have ever " actuated me, to fling myſelf at your Feet, " and to aſk Pardon, but not to beſtow it, " or to arraign your Actions. Pray, my " Lord, compoſe yourſelf; let your remain- " ing Hours (I fear indeed they will paſs " too ſwiftly away) be employed in ma- " king your Peace with Heaven: 'Tis, I " hope, ſufficient, that you have a thorough " Deteſtation of Vice; that you reſolve, " even if you were to live your Days over " again, never to ſully the Dignity of your " Nature by degrading Crimes, for the " benign and pitiful Creator we adore, to " extend his Mercy to you. No one, but " that kind and bountiful Being, can ſee " the Heart; but be you only ſincere, and " leave the reſt to him *who trieth the Heart* " *and the Reins.* Take care, my Lord, " that, by Acts and Words of Deſperation, " you do not irritate a Being, whom we " already have all of us grievouſly offended."

" Ah! *Charles*," the ſick Man replied, " your Goodneſs covers me with Confu- " ſion: Would to God I were like you, " and had as little to anſwer for; I " ſhould then go with Pleaſure the Way " of all Fleſh;—but no more of this at

" preſent. Was you out of Town when I " ſent to your Lodgings?"—" Yes, my " Lord," he replied, " I was at the Seat of " Mr. *Worthy*, in *Berkſhire*, a Gentleman, " in whoſe Acquaintance, and that of his " Family, I enjoy much Happineſs. I came " from thence, indeed, on purpoſe to aſk your " Conſent for my Marriage to his lovely " Daughter *Henrietta*, whom he has moſt " generouſly conſented to beſtow upon me, " with a Fortune of 30,000*l.* I ſuppoſe, " my Lord, you have heard of them: It is " an ancient Houſe, allied to many of our " Nobility; and the Lady herſelf will be an " Honour and a Credit to your Family. " But, my Lord, pardon me for mention- " ing this Circumſtance, which had now " better be dropped:---Your Danger ſwal- " lows up every Satisfaction, and deadens " the delightful Proſpect before me, in " which I hoped my Father would have " rejoiced with me."

" My Son, I rejoice in your good For- " tune, and make no Doubt your Happi- " neſs will be complete:—Your Virtue and " your Piety deſerve the Bleſſings you re- " ceive.---Oh! how many Wounds has " this Communication opened!—Oh! Con- " ſcience! — Conſcience! — is it impoſ- " ſible to allay thy Reproaches?---That " worthy Gentleman---how did I abuſe " him!---But, ah! *Maria*, thy Words are " now verified:---Happineſs I have never " taſted ſince my Cruelty to that lovely

" Maid!

" Maid!---Oh! Hell! Hell! gape wide " for me! I come! I come.---*Reflection* " does now, indeed, *make me the wretched-* " *eſt of Mankind.*---Oh! *Maria! Maria!* " ---could I but receive thy Forgiveneſs, " thou injured unhappy Maid, I ſhould die " more peaceably than my Conſcience will " otherwiſe ſuffer me to do; but, alas! " thou art perhaps wandering---in the " Hands of Strangers;---or, ere now, Death " has put a Period to all thy Regrets, and " thou art gone to appear before the awful " Tribunal, to ſeal the Sentence of my " Damnation!"

The Colonel, ſhocked at theſe horrid Expreſſions, was ſilent: He remembered what he had heard of *Maria*, and was fearful his Father had gone further in Wickedneſs than he had ever dared to ſuppoſe. He was ruminating thus when he was aroused by his Father's Voice, crying, " *Charles!* " *Charles!* is it impoſſible for me to ſee " *Worthy*, and to thank him for the Honour " he has done you?" " No, my Lord," he replied, " he came to Town with me, and " in an Hour's Time I can bring him to " you." " Do ſo, my Son," he returned, ---" I will do all I can to right that injured " Creature, before I die.---Ah! how few " *Worthies*, *Maria*, was it thy Fortune to " meet with! My Confeſſion will be hum- " bling,---d---'d mortifying, 'tis true; but, " alas! I muſt ſoon confeſs before God! " ---Can I then think it hard to confeſs

" before

" before Men? Go, *Charles*, and bring him " to me!---tell him I long to ſee him, " and to aſk Pardon for my Rudeneſs to " him ſome Time ſince.---Where is your " Brother?---But I need not aſk you,---he " never kept ſuch Sort of Company! Oh! " were he here to ſee his Father die, it " might terrify him from his wicked Cour- " ſes!---There again, I am loſt for ever! " ---I, this abominable Father! firſt cor- " rupted his Morals; firſt ſhewed him a " vicious Example:---He has indeed fol- " lowed it cloſely;---he has even exceeded " the Original!---No Duty can dwell to- " wards me in his Breaſt:---Can I expect " it---when we have neither of us diſchar- " ged our Duties to our Maker!"

The Colonel went out of the Room, with a Heart full of Terror and Anguiſh; he hardly knew where he was, ſo much the late dreadful Diſcourſe had confounded him; and had got into the Park, and taken three or four Turns in the Mall, before he re-collected the Commiſſion he had to diſ-charge.

He found Mr. *Worthy* at his own Houſe, where they had all appointed to ſup, and with Tears in his Eyes gave him a Recital of what had paſſed at his Viſit to his Fa-ther, and begged him, moſt earneſtly, to comply with his Requeſt of viſiting him: But he need not have urged him twice; the Hopes of ſome Intelligence of *Maria*, the Pity for a Fellow-Creature in ſuch a

State,

State, made him eager to wait upon the dying Man; and ordering Chairs, they directly went to his Houſe, and were admitted into his Chamber. He had had two or three violent Fits in the ſhort Time the Colonel was abſent, and was much lower in his Spirits; but when he obſerved Mr. *Worthy*, who kindly expreſſed his Concern to ſee him ſtruggling with ſo deſperate a Diſeaſe, his Eyes reſumed a Brightneſs, that they ſeemed no more able to recover; and he thanked him with much Cordiality, ſhook him heartily by the Hand, and after deſiring him and his Son to draw near and be ſeated, he uttered the following Words:

"My Son, the only Comfort I have, "has informed me, Sir, of your intended "Goodneſs to him, in favouring the De"ſire of his Heart; for which I pay you "my ſincere Acknowledgements. He in"deed deſerves your Goodneſs, and I hope "will be always equal to your Expecta"tions, and prove himſelf a worthy and "indulgent Huſband to your excellent "Daughter. In the next Place, dear Sir, "forgive me for the Heat, Paſſion, and "Abſurdity of my Conduct, when I came "to your Houſe to enquire after poor *Ma*"*ria*. I know of no Man ſo proper to "make the mortifying Confeſſion to, of "the Injuries that Maid has ſuffered from "my Family, as yourſelf; you delivered "her from Danger and Deſtruction, and,

"poor

" poor Creature, if she is living, may make
" her happy.

" Painful as this Confession is, you can-
" not conceive an Idea of a Man who has
" led a wickeder Life than myself. I stuck
" at no Means, however base and dishon-
" nourable, to procure what my depraved
" Mind induced me to miscall Pleasure. I
" have indeed disgraced my Rank, dissi-
" pated an opulent Fortune, and behaved
" unbecoming a rational Creature; for
" which I suffer, even before I die, all the
" Pangs of an Outcast from Heaven, and
" a Subject of everlasting Torment. Let
" me, at least, before the Moment of my
" Dissolution arrives, do all the Justice I
" can to a Lady I have so vilely injured.

" You remember, Sir, a Relation of
" mine, Lady *Aston*, who married after-
" wards an *Irish* Baronet, Sir *Alexander Fitz-*
" *gerald*. She was a bad Woman, under
" the Appearance of Sanctity, and a strict
" Attachment to the Ceremonies of her
" Faith, whereby she imposed on many
" worthy Persons who confided in and
" trusted her.

" It was at her House I first saw *Maria*,
" and from her I had the following Ac-
" count of that poor young Lady. I will
" be brief; for my Time is short in this
" World.

" A Woman, whose Name I never heard,
" died about twenty Years since at *Besan-*
" *çon* in *France*, who left her, then an In-
" fant,

" fant, to the Care of one Mrs. *Sergiſſon*,
" who afterwards ſettled at *Douay*, in *Flan-*
" *ders*, and to whom ſhe bequeathed about
" 20,000 Livres, with the Account that
" ſhe was the Daughter of an opulent Fa-
" mily in *England*, who had intruſted her
" to her Care; that loving the Child fondly,
" and to ſecure it from being bred up in
" the heretical Opinions of her Parents,
" ſhe had retired with her, after many Con-
" cealments, to that Place, hoping to breed
" her up in the true Faith. Mrs. *Sergiſſon*
" tenderly diſcharged her Duty, and died
" at *Douay*, whilſt *Maria* was a Child,
" delivering her with the ſame Charge to
" one Mrs. *Nelſon*, with an Addition of
" 20,000 Livres more to her little Fortune.
" Mrs. *Nelſon* brought her to *England*, but
" in a Fit of Devotion retiring from the
" World, put her under the Care of Lady
" *Aſton*, (after making an Addition of
" 2000 *l.* to her Fortune,) who was ap-
" parently a Devotee of the ſame Faith.
" Mrs. *Nelſon*, at her Death, left her 6000 *l.*
" more; which, as Lady *Aſton*'s Extrava-
" gancies, and her ſecond unfortunate Mar-
" riage, had reduced her to great Neceſ-
" ſities, was too ſtrong a Temptation to
" be reſiſted. She put many Arts in Prac-
" tice (to prevent *Maria* from being taken
" out of her Hands) of a truly diabolical
" Caſt; but finding Force, and even Cun-
" ning, inſufficient for that Purpoſe, ſhe
" ſtruck up a Bargain with me. Alas!

" to

" to deceive the Ignorant, to debauch the " Innocent, had been too long practiſed by " me, to make me pauſe at ſuch an Oppor- " tunity; beſide that I had long entertained " a Deſire to be poſſeſſed of the young Crea- " ture, and had, for that vile Purpoſe, en- " deavoured to ingratiate myſelf with her. " As ſhe had been very urgent to be put " in a Way of diſcovering her Parents, " upon this we grounded our Project.

" One Day, when I dined there, having " all my Inſtructions given me, I talked " before her of my having unfortunately " loſt a Daughter, and deſcribed her by " ſuch Tokens as Lady *Aſton* had ſhewn " me, ſo as to induce the charming Crea- " ture to think I was really one of her long- " loſt Parents. Let me not dwell upon this " horrid Scene, wherein, deaf to all the " Dictates of Humanity, we beheld the " unaffected Tranſports of the poor Maid, " (which would have melted a Barbarian to " Compaſſion) almoſt unmoved, and tri- " umphed in her Deluſion.

" I took her home, and for a Time " ſhewed her, and made every one ſhew her, " the Regard due to a Daughter. But I " burnt with a Flame, that, as the Object " was always preſent, daily increaſed, and " urged me to Actions which terribly alarm- " ed her, though ſhe preſerved to the laſt " the Reſpect ſhe thought my Due as her " Parent. My wretched Son, Lord *Belvi-* " *dere*, was alſo ſmitten with her Charms,

" and,

" and, as I had let him into the Secret of " her Hiſtory, I believe he made ſome Ad- " vantages thereof, and firſt alarmed her " with her not being his Siſter. That " young Man, I was informed by a Ser- " vant, in whom I thought I could con- " fide,---(idle Thought! for when are Vil- " lains true, if they can get any thing by " betraying each other?)---he informed me, " I ſay, that *Belvidere* and *Maria* were " upon a Project of Marriage, and that " the next Day *Maria* was to elope for " that Purpoſe.

" Enraged at this Injury, as I thought it, " I reſolved to terrify *Maria* into an im- " mediate Compliance with my Deſires. I " ſent for her into an Apartment at the En- " trance of my Houſe, threatened her in " Terms that I bluſh for, and ordered her " to chuſe an Alternative, either to be- " come my Miſtreſs, or to be turned out " of Doors. Her firm and ſpirited Beha- " viour drove me almoſt to Diſtraction; " in my Frenzy I really turned her out on " a very inclement Night, and have never " ſeen her ſince.

" I repented, however, the Minute after " ſhe departed, and found I was curſed be- " hind my Back by my Servants for my " Cruelty, who all of them adored the " excellent young Lady; therefore I called " two of the moſt truſty, and ſent them " to dog her at a Diſtance; but not to " aſſiſt her, only to ſee no Harm was done

" her;

" her; and, when ſpent with Fatigue, to
" adviſe her to return, and comply with my
" Will: But I believe even theſe ſupple
" Inſtruments of mine were pleaſed with
" being Witneſſes, Sir, of her gaining an
" Aſylum with you, of which they gave
" me an Account at their Return, which
" cauſed me more Pain than I can expreſs.
" My Fondneſs now revived, and I curſed
" my Behaviour to her, nay, I believe,
" ſhould have been content only to have
" ſeen her, if I could have recalled her
" back again to my Houſe. All her Beau-
" ties and Graces were continually before
" me; and at laſt I reſolved to make you
" that Viſit, the Reſult of which you re-
" member, when I vented ſuch Calumnies
" againſt the worthy Maid, as had not the
" leaſt Foundation. Judge, Sir, the Con-
" dition I was thrown into ſoon after, when
" my Son owned to me that he had been
" rejected by her with equal Scorn and De-
" teſtation, and that he bribed the Fellow
" to give me Information of their deſigned
" clandeſtine Marriage, that it might ope-
" rate upon me as it did, and cauſe me
" to abandon her, when he ſuppoſed ſhe
" would be more pliable to his Wiſhes.
" If we had not been parted by the Ser-
" vants, I believe, upon this Diſcovery,
" Murder would have enſued; the grace-
" leſs Son, and the wicked Father, drew
" on each other, and it was with Difficulty
" we were refrained from the Perpetra-

" tion

"tion of (if poſſible) a greater Crime. "Soon after he alſo diſappeared, and I "have not ſet Eyes on him ſince. Now, "Gentlemen," addreſſing himſelf to his Son and Mr. *Worthy*, "if *Maria* ſhould "ſtill be in Being, if her Misfortunes "have not been finiſhed by her Death, "ſhe may yet, perhaps, recover her Pa- "rents. I received from Lady *Fitzgerald* "a Pillow, Cradle-Quilt and Mantle, "(there they are) which were worked by "her Mother, and muſt belong to People "of Condition, by their Value: Theſe, "Mr. *Worthy*, a Servant of mine ſhall "convey to your Houſe; and if ever you "ſee the unhappy Lady again, which I "pray God you may, reſtore them to her; "and I beſeech you tell her, that with my "lateſt Breath I expreſſed my unfeigned "Repentance for the Hardſhips I have in- "flicted upon her, and for the Embezzle- "ment of one Moiety of her Fortune, and "my Connivance at the Embezzlement of "the other. I have ordered the 5000 *l.* in "my Will to be paid to her from the firſt "Money that ariſes by the Sale of my Plate, "Houſhold-Goods, *&c.* if ſhe ever ap- "pears to claim it. But, alas! my Son "may perhaps render that Proviſion abor- "tive.---Oh God! where ſhall I fly for "Refuge from thy avenging Wrath!"

Here his Spirits failed him, and he ſeemed really departing. His Auditors, ſtruck with his Narration, were full of Reflection upon the

the Hardſhips poor *Maria* had undergone. Mr. *Worthy* particularly, who had conceived the greateſt Affection for her, afreſh lamented the Uncertainty of her Fate; but took Care to have the Mantle, Pillow, and Quilt, carried to his Houſe, as a pleaſing Thought had ariſen in his Mind, which he hoped they would ſerve to confirm.

Lord *Beaumont* recovered from his Fit in a few Minutes, in which he had repeated the Name of *Maria* a Number of Times, and called for Damnation on himſelf, in the moſt blaſphemous and diabolical Terms. He caſt his Eyes about him wildly; but at length, being ſomewhat compoſed, the humane and ſympathetic Mr. *Worthy* thus addreſſed him.

" My Lord, I will not diſguiſe from you " my Senſe of your Crimes; they have " been many and various, and I hope your " Repentance, though late, will ſave you " from Perdition. Rely upon the Mercy " of God, and the Mediation and Death " of a precious Redeemer; 'tis the only " Hold you have. Your Sorrow for your " Offences, your ſincere Confeſſion of your " Guilt, I hope, will greatly avail to reſcue " you from the Puniſhment you own you " deſerve. With regard to *Maria*, I will " take upon me to repay what has been " purloined from her by you and Lady " *Aſton*, and will, if haply ſhe is ever re- " ſtored to us, be a Father to her in every

" Reſpect,

"Reſpect, if ſhe never finds her real Pa-
"rents."

The Earl thanked him ſincerely for his Generoſity; and pulling a Diamond-Ring from his Finger, put it upon his Son's, ſaying, "*Charles*, I have little to give you; "but take that Ring, which was a Pre-"ſent from your excellent Mother, and "wear it for her Sake, if not for mine; "and if by any Means you can reclaim "Lord *Belvidere* from his vile Courſes,--- "remember---Oh! remember---he is your "Brother, and the Son of that dear Wo-"man. I have, I hope, left perſonal Eſtate "ſufficient to pay my Debts; the Reſidue "comes to you. I have appointed your "Brother and yourſelf to be my Executors. "Farewell, Mr. *Worthy!* Farewell, dear "*Charles!* Pray for me, and, if poſſible, "when I am gone, bury the Remem-"brance of my Crimes.---I ſhould be glad "to ſee Lord *Belvidere*, but---Lord have "Mercy---upon a miſerable Sinner!"---- Another Fit that Moment ſeized him, which carried him out of this World, to appear before the great, the righteous Being, who abounds in Mercy to the Tranſgreſſors, who is ſlow to Anger, and of great Compaſſion, at whoſe Tribunal we muſt all appear, and who will make all the Allowance for the Frailities of poor Mortals that his adorable Attributes will permit.

The Gentlemen were more ſhocked than grieved at his Death. A decent Concern

was expreſſed by his Son, who was now obliged to ſtay in Town, and ſuppoſed the new Earl, his Brother, would ſoon arrive, when he read in the public Papers of his Father's Death.

Mr. *Worthy* and Mr. *Welldone* left Town the next Day, bearing a Letter from the Colonel to Miſs *Henrietta*, wherein he accounted for the Neceſſity of his ſtaying behind them.

When the three Ladies heard the Manner of the old Earl's Death, they were ſtrangely moved, and forgot his Crimes, whilſt they deplored the Wretchedneſs of a Fellow-Creature.

As to the Earl's Account of *Maria*, *Worthy* kept it in his own Breaſt, for which he had given his Reaſons to the Colonel, and enjoined him to the ſame Secreſy, till that unfortunate Maid could be found: But upon *Henrietta*'s Importunity, he ventured to divulge it to her; whereupon they made Reflections that gave them ſome little Relief from their Trouble on her Account, though the Uncertainty of her Fate excited exquiſite Pain.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Maria *is ſeized by Ruffians.----Who they prove to be.---She is reſcued.---The Priſoners carried to* Latimer-Hall.---*An intereſting Diſcovery.*

MEan time, at Lady *Latimer*'s, in the next County, all was Peace, Harmony and Happineſs; ſave that *Lætitia* was ſometimes poſſeſſed with the Demons of Envy and Jealouſy, piqued at the Favours her Aunt was always heaping upon *Maria*; and that Lady frequently remembered, with a Sigh and a falling Tear, her dear *Henrietta*. Every Day, of late, Lady *Latimer* had taken *Maria* and *Lucy* with her in the Coach to viſit the Poor, the Sick, or for an Airing; for, as they now never heard any thing of *Belvidere*, they imagined he was gone out of the County. *Lætitia* indeed might have better informed them; but ſhe never dared mention hitherto her Correſpondence with him, hoping ſome lucky Opportunity might happen that would enable her to own her Love, though there ſeemed no Manner of Probability of ever doing it to her Aunt with Succeſs. However, ſhe in her Mind reſolved to wear a Coronet at all Adventures, and believed that her own Fortune would be a ſufficient Bait to a needy Nobleman.

One Day they had taken a Tour for ſeveral Miles, the Weather being remarkably fine and ſerene, with only one Servant on Horſeback, and he without Fire Arms, to attend them. As they paſſed by the Side of a Wood, which lay in their Way home, (from whence, being on the Side of a Hill, they had a moſt charming Proſpect for ſeveral Miles) they heard a Groaning, as of a Perſon in violent Torture, who now and then repeated, "Will no humane Paſſen-"ger hear me! Does no worthy Chriſtian "paſs this Way! Is there not a good *Sa-*"*maritan* within hearing! Here I lie, "with a broken Thigh, I fear, and per-"haps may die before any Aſſiſtance comes! "Oh! Lord have Mercy upon me!" As this was bellowed out in as loud a Tone as poſſible, they could eaſily diſtinguiſh every Word, as the Coach drove gently along; and Lady *Latimer* immediately ordered it to ſtop, ſaying, "*Maria*, this is certainly "ſome poor Man in Diſtreſs; let us ſee if "we can aſſiſt him here, otherwiſe we will "put him into the Coach, and carry him "home; 'tis not ſo very far but we can "walk ourſelves, if neceſſary, rather than "ſuffer a Fellow-Creature to periſh." So ſaying, they alighted, and, following the Sound of the Voice, were led into the thickeſt Part of the Wood, and near a Quarter of a Mile from their Carriage and Servants, when at length they diſcovered a poor Creature, ſhabby in Dreſs, and to all Appearance in the

the greateſt Agony. Her Ladyſhip enquired into his Caſe, and he informed her, that climbing a Tree which was next to him, in order to diſcover his Way out of the Wood, in which, being a Stranger, he had loſt himſelf, a Bough gave way, he fell, and feared, by the Pain he felt in that Part, he had broke his Thigh: He prayed her Ladyſhip, for Heaven's Sake, to ſend him ſome Aſſiſtance, if it was in her Power, to carry him to the next Town, where he hoped he ſhould procure the Help of a Surgeon, if he could find one who was humane enough to conſider a poor Man, who had little Money to help himſelf. This Speech was accompanied with ſo many Indications of Pain, that the Ladies had not the leaſt Suſpicion of his being an Impoſtor. "What "ſhall we do now, my *Maria?*" Lady *Latimer* ſaid: "The poor Man can nei-"ther ſtand or walk. Do you think, *Lucy*, "you could find your Way to the Coach? "If you can, you may order the two Men "to come to us; we'll put him into the "Coach, and walk home ourſelves." *Lucy* made no Difficulty of obeying, and ſaid ſhe was ſure ſhe could find the Coach eaſily, and accordingly ran with great Swiftneſs the Way they came. When ſhe was out of Sight, the lame Man ſtarted up upon his Feet, and whiſtling with his Fingers, three other Men, with Maſks on their Faces, preſented themſelves, and immediately laid hold of *Maria*, who, as well as her Ladyſhip,

was terrified, as indeed they had great Reaſon, to the laſt Degree. Lady *Latimer*, who was a Woman of Spirit and Courage ſuperior to her Sex, obſerving them, inſtead of aſking for their Purſes, rudely ſeize *Maria*, ſuſpected at once this was a freſh Scheme of the wicked *Belvidere*, and tore the Maſk from the Face of the Villain next to her, crying, "Scoundrels! I'll know the "Authors of this Outrage, however, that "their Puniſhment may be equal to their "Crime." At the Sight of that Face *Maria* ſhrieked out, (for though ſhe was ſtruggling with the two others with all her Strength, her Ladyſhip's Words and Actions had drawn her Attention that Way, more fearful for her than herſelf) and exclaimed,—"Oh, my Lady!—'tis *Belvi-*"*dere!*"—"Is it indeed you, my Lord?" her Ladyſhip ſaid.—"I'll make you dearly "repent your Audacity,—thou Diſgrace to "Nobility,—to Manhood,—to thy Fa-"mily!—Here, *William! Thomas!* make "Haſte to us!—I myſelf am able to engage "one of theſe Bravoes at leaſt." Her Ladyſhip halloo'd this out with a loud Voice; and *Maria*'s Cries, at the ſame time, reſounding through the Wood, they were heard by her Servants, who with *Lucy* immediately ran towards the Spot, to which they were before leiſurely walking; but miſſing their Way, would certainly have arrived too late, as, in ſpite of the Reſiſtance the Villains experienced from the two Ladies,

Ladies, *Maria* was dragged a long Way, and Lady *Latimer*, quite ſpent with Fatigue, was fallen upon the Ground in the utmoſt Agony, at the Sight of what ſhe no longer had it in her Power to oppoſe, when a Gentleman of a good Preſence, and a youthful Mien, on Horſeback, galloped up, and ſeeing *Maria* ſo roughly handled, cried out, "Raſcals! Dogs!—unhand the "Lady!" and at the ſame time drew a Piſtol out of his Holſter, and let fly at the neareſt of them, who dropped directly; then riding full-ſpeed upon the other three, who had now unhanded the Lady, he knocked one of them down with the Handle of his Whip; but a ſecond fired a Piſtol, and his Ball grazed the Gentleman's Shoulder, and took off a Piece of his Coat, without doing him further Damage. By this Time Lady *Latimer*'s two Servants had got up, and ſoon diſtinguiſhing who was their Friend, being armed with Sticks, which they cut as they came along, one of them cried out, "Courage, good Sir; we will "aſſiſt you;" upon which the remaining two Villains took to their Heels, and being nimbler than their Purſuers, and better acquainted with the Wood, ſoon got out of Sight. As to the Stranger, he was, as it were, entranced; he had left the Purſuit to his two Aſſiſtants, who, by their Livery, he ſuppoſed, were the Lady's Servants, and alighted from his Horſe to aſſure her ſhe was ſafe; when he perceived ſhe was in a Swoon.

Raiſing her in his Arms, he diſcovered ſo many Charms in the inſenſible Beauty, as at once converted what was before a Deed of Humanity into an Act of Inclination, wherein he found his Heart concerned. He chafed her Temples, opened her Hands, and did all he could to recover her; and in folding his Arms around her, felt himſelf thrill all over with unuſual Tranſport. At this Moment Lady *Latimer* and *Lucy*, out of Breath, and full of Apprehenſion, reached the Spot; and ſeeing *Maria* in the Arms of a Stranger, and in a Swoon, were at firſt deceived, and thought him one of the Raviſhers, but were ſoon convinced to the contrary by his ſaying, "For Heaven's ſake, "Ladies, lend me your Aſſiſtance; I pre- "ſume you belong to this young Lady; "the Firing of the Piſtols, I ſuppoſe, has "cauſed her to faint.—Pray, Madam, "have you any Hartſhorn?" Her Ladyſhip had a Smelling-Bottle fortunately in her Pocket, which ſhe held to *Maria*'s Noſe, and which, with other Means, at laſt brought her to herſelf; though ſhe continued ſpeechleſs, and rolling her Eyes about for ſome time, ſtill oppreſſed with Terror, and not able to diſtinguiſh her Friends from her Foes. The Stranger now ſtood at ſome Diſtance, obſerving the Ladies, with his Arms acroſs, in a contemplative Poſture.—"Oh! "my dear *Maria*," her Ladyſhip cried, "calm your Spirits, you are providentially "freed from your Danger—You are de-

"livered,

" livered, my Child, Thanks to Heaven,
" and to a Gentleman ſent by Heaven to
" our Relief!" *Lucy* wept and ſobbed inceſſantly, and at length *Maria* entirely recovered her Senſes, and was ſoon able to ſtand upon her Feet. The Stranger and the two Servants, who were returned from the Purſuit, were now buſy in examining their Priſoners; one of them was only ſtunned, and ſoon came to himſelf, whom they immediately bound; the other, of a more gentle Aſpect, had received the Ball in his Side, and was inſenſible, and groaning with his Pain. This done, the Stranger advancing to Lady *Latimer*, ſaid, " Madam, I
" look upon it as a great Happineſs to my-
" ſelf that I was able to afford you my Aſ-
" ſiſtance, and I am glad to ſee your Daugh-
" ter has received no Hurt. What Wretches
" muſt theſe be, to ill-uſe ſo charming a
" Creature! Do you know theſe two,
" Madam? and in what Manner would you
" have them treated?" " Sir," Lady *Latimer* replied, " we will endeavour to be
" grateful for the invaluable Service you
" have performed; we know the Authors
" of this Outrage, and the wounded Per-
" ſon, I believe, is a young Nobleman,
" who has long been a Diſgrace to his Dig-
" nity. See, my *Maria*, if that is not
" your Enemy." *Maria* tremblingly looked at his Face, and ſaid, " Oh! my Lady,
" it is indeed Lord *Belvidere*: Poor Crea-
" ture, he has now paid for all his Folly."

"Folly!" Lady *Latimer* returned; "'tis "too mild a Term, my Dear; but as we "know who he is, we will not ſuffer him "to periſh. Our Servants ſhall convey "him to the Coach, and that other Wretch, "who ſhall be dealt with as his Crime de- "ſerves; and if this good Youth," looking at the Stranger, "will accompany us, "and you are able to walk, we will walk "home: My Houſe is little more than a "Mile from hence, where we will con- "vince him he has not obliged the Un- "grateful." The Stranger bowed, and, with an admirable Grace, ſaid, "God "forbid, Madam, that I ſhould leave you "before I ſee you ſafe.—I find I ſhould be "very unhappy if I were not allowed that "Honour." Here he ſtole a Glance at *Maria*, which was not unnoticed by that Lady, who had contemplated his Perſon very earneſtly for ſome Moments, and felt herſelf greatly prejudiced in his Favour.

Lord *Belvidere* was carried to the Coach by the Servants, and laid at the Bottom; his Companion, ſullenly holding down his Head, was alſo placed in the Vehicle, the Servant on Horſeback, armed with the Gentleman's Piſtols, riding beſide it, and leading his Horſe; and in this Manner they moved on towards her Ladyſhip's Manſion. The Ladies, and their Deliverer, took another Route, more proper for Perſons on Foot, and arrived a few Minutes after the Coach, which was ordered to be driven very

very slowly, on account of the wounded Party.

Lord *Belvidere* was carried to a handsome Chamber, laid in Bed, and a Surgeon sent for to examine his Wound, which appeared, by his present Condition, to be very dangerous. The Gentleman who delivered them from their Danger was conducted into the Dining-Room, and appeared, by his Person and Behaviour, to merit their Consideration. He was of the middle Stature, his Limbs finely proportioned, and his Countenance had such a remarkable Sweetness, as must prepossess every one that beheld him in his Favour. His Complexion was fair, though seemingly tanned by the Heat of the Sun; a fine Head of Chesnut Hair was tied behind with a Ribband, and flowed down almost to the Middle of his Back. His Address was graceful, and his Voice harmonious. His Dress was plain, but genteel; and the Diamond-Buttons at his Wrist, and a Ruby of remarkable Lustre on his Finger, declared him to be above the common Rank. Wine and Sweetmeats were brought in to refresh them after their Fatigue, and then the Prisoner was brought before them. He confessed that he was a Footman of Sir *Thomas Jones*'s; that Sir *Thomas*, a Footman of Lord *Belvidere*'s, and a Husbandman, were the other Parties concerned in the late Outrage; and offered to beg Pardon for his Offence upon his Knees, which, to prevent further Trouble, the Ladies seemed

ſeemed willing to grant, as his Head had received a ſevere Cut, and as they had one of the Principals in the Houſe, and knew the Name of the other. The Gentleman obſerved alſo, that his being a Servant, and obeying the Orders of his Maſter, who was in Company, was ſome Extenuation of his Crime, though it would not be conſidered in that Light, he believed, in a Court of Juſtice; and therefore, upon his aſking Pardon, upon his Knees, of the Ladies, and promiſing an unexceptionable Behaviour for the future, he was diſmiſſed, with an Order to aſſure his Maſter that he muſt expect the utmoſt Severity of the Law.

"I am ſorry," the young Gentleman ſaid, "that young Fellows of Rank and Fortune ſhould give themſelves over to their "Vices, and diſturb the Peace, and tranſgreſs thoſe Laws they were born to be the "Guardians of; and how happy I am, "Ladies, that I came ſo opportunely thro' "that Wood, drawn by the Beauty of the "Proſpect on every Side; that I was ſo "fortunate as to be of Service to, and acquire the Friendſhip of, Perſons of ſuch "real Merit! and it ſhall be the Study of "my Life, if you will permit it, to cultivate that Friendſhip." He would then have reſpectfully taken his Leave, ſaying, he had near fifteen Miles to ride, being impatient to embrace a Father and Mother whom he had not ſeen for ſome Years, and who impatiently expected his Arrival.

Lady

Lady *Latimer* repreſented the Lateneſs of the Hour, and begged he would ſtay all Night, if not two or three Days, at her Houſe; ſaid ſhe could not think of parting with a Gentleman to whom ſhe owed ſo much, ſo ſuddenly; and ſeeing him ſtill bent on going, nodded to *Maria* to ſecond her Requeſt, which ſhe did in that Manner ſo peculiar to her, and ſo engaging, that her Deliverer could reſiſt no longer; and his Horſe was ordered into the Stable, and a Bed ſuitable to his Appearance to be made up. "I hope," ſays he, "my Friends "will not be alarmed at my Stay, though "I have ſent my Servants home before me; "for, landing at *Dover* with a Companion, "I complied with his Deſire of ſpending a "Day or two at his Father's in *Bedford-ſhire*, from whence I ſent them home, be-"ing a great Friend to Solitude, and reſolv-"ed to indulge my Humour in the reſt of my "Journey. This I only once repented, "which was when I perceived the Number, "Ladies, of your Enemies; then, indeed, "I wiſhed I had had them with me; but "the Appearance of your honeſt Servants "put an End to my Fears." "How long, "Sir, have you been abroad?" ſaid the old Lady. "I think it is now three Years "and a few Months," he replied. "I return, "I hope, with ſome Improvement; but in "this I ſhall be unfaſhionable, I believe, "that I prefer my own Country, its Laws, "Government, and Manners, beyond thoſe

"of

" of any Countrry I have been in, to ſpeak " in general: Some uſeful Cuſtoms I have " indeed obſerved, which I could wiſh " were introduced here, if it could be " done without injuring or abating that " noble Spirit of Liberty ſo peculiar to " *Engliſhmen.* Another Aſſertion will make " me taken for a perfect Booby too, by all " the gay and polite Gentlemen who have " made the grand Tour; when I can aſ- " ſure them I never beheld a Lady, in all " my Travels, that I thought ſo handſome " as the Beauties of my own Country; and " my Encounter with you, Ladies, has " more and more confirmed me in my Opi- " nion." Here he bowed to *Maria*, who bluſhed, and ſeemed confuſed; whilſt Lady *Latimer*, perfectly delighted with him, ſmiled at his Concluſion, and returned,—" Ah! " Sir, I can tell you, you have, I fancy, " improved in the Art of ſaying very polite " Things by your Travels; but, indeed, I " will join with you, and agree, that my " Child, my *Maria*, will not perhaps be " excelled in Perfections by any Female in " the Univerſe. This I can ſay, with the " leſs Imputation of Vanity, as I am not ſo " happy as to be her Mother, though I have " the ſame Tenderneſs for her as if I held " that Relation."—" Oh! my dear Madam," *Maria* replied, " you perfectly confuſe me. " —Pray, Madam!"—" Oh! Miſs," the young Gentleman put in, " all the World " muſt acknowledge the Truth of her Lady-

" ſhip's Obſervation, though you yourſelf " are ſo humble as to think otherwiſe."

The coming in of the Surgeon to make a Report of Lord *Belvidere*'s Wound gave ſome Reſpite to a Diſcourſe which much embarraſſed *Maria*. He ſaid the Wound was dangerous, but not mortal; that he had ſafely extracted the Ball; and if his Patient eſcaped a Fever, he had no Doubt of his Cure; but adviſed his being kept as ſtill and quiet as poſſible.

As the Surgeon was going out, *Lætitia*, who had been to *Beaconsfield* upon a Viſit, returned in the Chariot, and was ſurpriſed to ſee a ſtrange Gentleman, whoſe Perſon excited all her Attention; and ſhe was going to play off her ſoft Artillery of Ogles, Languiſhments, and Liſps, when her Aunt ſurpriſed her with the Relation of the late Adventure; told her Lord *Belvidere* was wounded, and a-bed in the Houſe; and as it was not proper that either herſelf or *Maria* ſhould take any Notice of him, ſhe deſired her to overſee his Management, and to take care that nothing was wanting for his Accommodation during his Cure.

At the Mention of Lord *Belvidere*, *Lætitia* turned pale; but the Cauſe was not ſuſpected; ſhe promiſed to obey her Aunt's Directions, and, to hide her Confuſion, went out, as it were, to prepare for the Execution of her Office.

Maria had all this Time, and ever ſince her Deliverer entered the Houſe, been reflecting

flecting upon his Features, and was ſure they were ſuch as ſhe had been well acquainted with; and though ſhe did all ſhe could to guard her Heart from ſoft Impreſſions, ſhe found herſelf not in the ſame Situation as when ſhe firſt beheld him. This ſhe diſcovered when he was attempting to leave them; at which ſhe felt a ſtrange Reluctance, and as much Pleaſure when he conſented to ſtay. His Perſon, his Converſation, ſhe found moſt agreeable to her, and ſhe felt Senſations ſhe never had experienced before. In ſhort, he was the firſt of his Sex that had ever given her Cauſe to ſigh, which ſhe already frequently did involuntarily.

Before they ſeparated for Bed, Lady *Latimer* ſaid, "May we know, Sir, the Name "of a Gentleman, to whom we are ſo "much obliged? Excuſe my Curioſity, Sir; "but 'tis not merely a Female one; we all "love to know our Friends." "My Name, "my Lady," he replied, "is *Worthy*; I "have no Reaſon to bluſh at it, nor at the "very excellent Father from whom I de-"rive it, who has ever been an Honour to "his Family, and to Human Nature itſelf; "in whoſe Arms I long to be folded, and "whoſe Example I hope I ſhall ever ſtudy "to imitate."

'Tis impoſſible to deſcribe the Effect this Diſcovery made upon Lady *Latimer* and *Maria*; the former lifted up her Eyes to Heaven in ſilent Adoration, contemplating the Relief *Maria* had now experienced from the

the Son, as before from the Father; the latter, agitated by various Paſſions, was going to betray, by Action, her Senſibility. At once ſhe recalled all the Benefits ſhe had received from her dear *Henrietta*, and her Father and Mother; and this freſh Obligation, from one ſo nearly related to them, ſeemed to her an amazing Inſtance of the tender Care of Providence. She now perceived, the Features that had ſo ſtruck her were ſimilar to thoſe of her *Henrietta*, and wondered not at the ſoft Impreſſion they had made upon her Heart. She would have flown to embrace this Copy of his excellent Father; but recollecting the Reaſon of her leaving the Family, Delicacy reſtrained her, and her Ladyſhip freed her from the Confuſion of Ideas that oppreſſed her Mind, by anſwering, "Sir, I have heard ſuch an Account of your Father and your Family, "as makes me ſenſible what you ſay of "them, and more, if you had ſaid it, to "be ſtrictly true: Thank God, that in "this degenerate Age there are ſtill Perſons "of ſuch Goodneſs and Humanity to be "found; and the warm and affectionate "Manner, in which you have ſpoke of your "Father, has more and more endeared the "Son to me. Happy Family! where the "Goods of Fortune are the ſmalleſt Portion of their Poſſeſſions! where Virtue "and Benevolence reſide in all their pure "and unadulterated Charms! who ſeem

"born

" born for the Happineſs of others, as well " as their own!"

Happy for *Maria*, they now ſeparated, and retired to Reſt, after Mr. *Worthy* had promiſed to prolong his Stay to the End of the Week, it being now towards Evening. That young Lady accompanied Lady *Latimer* into her Chamber, and there gave free Looſe to what had ſo long oppreſſed her Mind. " Oh! my dear Lady! what a ſur- " priſing Chain of Events has happened! " that, after receiving ſo many Favours of " that truly amiable Family, I ſhould at laſt " owe my Reſcue to it this laſt Time!—and " by ſuch a Hand! Did you ever obſerve a " finer Man? What Sincerity, what Dig- " nity in all he ſays!—What a feeling Heart! " what dutiful and grateful Sentiments!— " Your Ladyſhip may now perceive that I " did not at all exaggerate, when I gave " you the Character of the Father;—the " Son is his very Model."

" My *Maria*," her Ladyſhip returned, as ſhe was undreſſing, " if I judge right, " this terrifying Adventure will be the " Source of much Happineſs. Did you " obſerve how charmed he was with you? " what timid Fearfulneſs he ſhewed when- " ever he looked at, or ſpoke to you?— " I am not acquainted with the Human " Heart, if he does not begin to feel for " my Child the ſofteſt, tendereſt Paſſion; " nor could I fail obſerving," continued ſhe

ſhe with a Smile, and tapping her upon the Shoulder, "that you was in more Con-"fuſion, whenever you looked at him, "than I have ever ſeen you before. Well, "*Maria*, ſo amiable a Youth deſerves ſo "excellent a Wife. Don't conceal any "thing from me, my Dear," ſeeing her bluſh extremely, and hold down her Head; "you are mine now, and I'll make your "Fortune adequate to all his Expectations, "if, as I wiſh, he loves you."—*Maria* kiſſed her Hand; but her Breaſt was too full to ſpeak: Tears of Gratitude ran down her Cheeks, and caſting a Look at the dear Woman, which expreſſed more than Words the Situation of her Heart, ſhe retired to her Chamber, where her faithful and affectionate *Lucy* waited with great Expectation for her. "Oh! Madam," ſhe cried, "what a Day have we ſeen!—I believe I "ſhall never recover myſelf;—and that "charming Gentleman, ſent, like an Angel "from Heaven, to your Aid!—I can't "expreſs the Terror I was under when I "ſaw you in that alarming Condition! "But Lord *Belvidere* will ſeverely pay for "all his Villainies: Miſs *Lætitia* has told "me ſhe thinks he is worſe;—he has not "yet been able to ſpeak. Bleſs the Hand "that puniſhed him! May he never live "to make you unhappy, and put you in "Danger more!"

Maria embraced her; thanked her for the Share ſhe had taken in this her ſecond Deliverance;

Deliverance; and they went to Bed, *Lucy* always lying with her Friend and beloved Miſtreſs: But it was long before Sleep could cloſe the Eyes of that Beauty; ſhe reflected over all the ſtrange Events of her Life; ſhe dwelt upon the many Inſtances in which Providence had ſo remarkably interpoſed to reſcue her from the greateſt Dangers; ſhe adored that Providence; ſhe contemplated with extreme Tenderneſs the Affection of Lady *Latimer* for her; and now, more than ever, ſighed after her Parents, as her Knowlege of them might make her appear not beneath the Addreſſes of young *Worthy*, whoſe Image was ever preſent to her Imagination.

CHAP. XIX.

Situation of Maria's *Heart.---Interview between her and her Deliverer.---Its Conſequences.---His Departure.*

THE Morning no ſooner appeared than *Maria* left her *Lucy*, faſt bound in the Arms of Sleep; for even her Company would have been an Interruption to thoſe Thoughts which now poſſeſſed her Mind entirely. She walked out into the delightful Garden, the better to indulge her Contemplations on the preſent Situation of her Affairs: But young *Worthy* was uppermoſt;

moſt; in vain ſhe endeavoured to wander from that faithful Idea; his Perfections had vanquiſhed her Heart, and ſhe could think of nothing but what related to her Love. She would fain have perſuaded herſelf, that his Relation to her *Henrietta*, and the Service he had done her, were the Motives of the Tenderneſs that overſpread her Soul; but her honeſt Breaſt ſoon gave up the vain Suppoſition; ſhe ſighed, a Tear ſtole down her Cheek, and, before ſhe was aware, his Name, in gentleſt Accents, broke from her Lips.

If poor *Maria* was thus ſituated, *Worthy* himſelf was not without his Diſturbances. He had not cloſed his Eyes for the greateſt Part of the Night, the Image of *Maria* preſented itſelf in ſo many enchanting and alluring Forms; her harmonious Voice ſweetly ſounded in his Ears, and he anticipated the Happineſs that would be his Portion, could he obtain ſo valuable a Prize; and placed that Felicity in ſo many Points of View, that he had full Employment for his Thoughts the greateſt Part of the Night; and in the ſhort Dozing (for it could not be called Sleep) that ſucceeded, he dreamed of the lovely Creature; imagined he diſcovered his Paſſion to her, but met with a Repulſe that drove him to Deſpair, and awaked in a great Agony, a cold Sweat bedewing his Face, and felt in that Moment as many painful Senſations as if the Converſation had really happened.

Unable

Unable any longer to endure the Bed, and ſeeing ſeveral Books upon a Table in the Chamber, he dreſſed himſelf, propoſing with them to divert his Thoughts till the Family roſe; but the Fineneſs of the Morning, and the beautiful Landſcape from his Window, which looked into the Garden, and commanded an extenſive Proſpect of the adjacent Country, arreſted his Attention. Judge his Tranſport when he diſcovered, after ſome Minutes, the Object of his Hopes and Fears, in an elegant Morning-Dreſs, walking up one of the Alleys towards his Window, and ſeemingly buried in Contemplation. His Heart fluttered, he could hardly refrain from giving Utterance to the joyful Feelings he experienced; but that he feared to interrupt the lovely Maid, and thereby to deprive himſelf of a Sight that gave him ſuch ecſtatic Pleaſure. Her fine Mien, graceful Motion, and the Harmony that reigned throughout her Perſon, he could now ſurvey at Leiſure, as ſhe ſeemed ſo deeply immerſed in Thought as not to lift up her charming Eyes, which were unalterably fixed on the Ground. As ſhe paſſed beneath his Window, he heard her ſigh, and it drew one from his Boſom. Soon ſhe turned into another Walk, and the envious Shades hid her from his View.

Suddenly he reſolved, if poſſible, to purſue her Steps, and make a Diſcovery of his Love, which, in ſo ſhort a Time, was arrived to Maturity, before he departed from the

the Houſe, and flattered himſelf Heaven had deſtined the preſent Opportunity for that Purpoſe. He then examined his Apartment, found the Door of it opened into the Library, and ſoon diſcovered the Back-Stairs, which from thence led him into the Garden; and looking up, he perceived, by the open Caſement, he was juſt beneath the Window out of which he had been looking. Full of Diffidence, he took the Path by which *Maria* had diſappeared from his Sight; but after walking for near Half an Hour in this romantic Spot, he found himſelf at the Entrance of the Park, without diſcovering what he was in eager Purſuit of.

At another Time he would, with curious Eye, have beheld ſo many Beauties of the Seaſon as at every Step delighted the Senſes; the opening Glades, the ſhady Bowers, the ſhining Foliage, the various Embelliſhments of this extenſive Garden and the adjacent Orchard, which *Vertumnus* ſeemed to have choſen to ſport in with the tempting *Pomona*, and to have variegated every Scene for her Entertainment.

At the Entrance of the Park he pauſed, and was going to return, when, as far as his Eye could reach, he diſcovered the lovely *Maria*, ſeated on the Green-ſward by the Side of a fine Fiſh-Pond. The Buſhes that grew near it affording him an Opportunity to approach undiſcovered, when he came near enough to diſtinguiſh, he found ſhe was employed in contemplating a ſmall Picture,

Picture, and heard her ſigh, and utter theſe Words: "Dear Creature! well-remembered Features! which I now ſurvey with mingled Pain and Pleaſure! Shall I ever ſee thee more!—Shall I be ever claſped again to thy Boſom, and hear the Profeſſions of thy tender Affection, which once uſed to greet my Ears!—Heaven, I fear, has no ſuch Bliſs in Store for the unfortunate *Maria!*"

Had Lightening transfixed the adoring Youth, he, perhaps, had preferred that Death to the Torture he at this Moment endured. Impelled by a Reſolution to declare his Paſſion, he had endeavoured to find the Object of his Fondneſs; he had now the wiſhed-for Opportunity of flinging himſelf at her Feet; but theſe Words convinced him he had a Rival, and a beloved Rival, to whoſe Picture ſhe had thus addreſſed herſelf. In an Inſtant Deſpair ſeized him, and he was about to return, when the Ruſtling of the Buſhes turned the Eyes of *Maria* that Way: She diſcovered him; and riſing in Confuſion, ſaid, ſweetly ſmiling, "You are an early Riſer, Sir, like me; you ſeem to think, it is more eligible to admire the pleaſing Beauties of Nature, than to waſte the unprofitable Hours in Sleep."

The Gentleneſs of this Speech almoſt recovered him from his torturing Reverie. He anſwered, "Ah! Madam, I am little able to taſte the Pleaſure you mention;

"other

"other Views directed me to this Spot: "But I fear I have interrupted your Meditations on a Subject that gives you an "Entertainment, of which it is cruel to "deprive you. Pardon me, charming "Fair, for my Intruſion. Happy! ſupremely happy, the Object whoſe Reſemblance you can contemplate with ſuch "Senſibility!"

Maria's Face was covered with a Crimſon Glow at this Speech; yet, conceiving at once that he had ſeen her with the Picture in her Hands, and perhaps heard her Words, with much Satisfaction perceived the Uneaſineſs it had given him; which was an Indication that his Heart was in the ſame Situation as her own. But as ſhe never took Delight to give Pain to others, and was far above the Practice of thoſe Arts that too much reign in her Sex, ſhe reſolved to diſabuſe him. "Indeed, Sir," ſays ſhe, "the Object I was contemplating "is worthy all my Affection; it is the "Likeneſs of a dear Friend, the Remembrance of whom, and of her Endearments, will ever warm my Breaſt. See, "Sir, if you think there was ever a more "engaging Countenance?"

Hereupon ſhe drew the Miniature of *Henrietta* from her Boſom, and preſented it to him. If the Conviction that it was not a Rival who had excited ſuch tender Motions in *Maria*'s Mind, gave him an ineffable Delight; yet how ſurpriſed was he to ſee

the well-known Features of his Siſter!— "Pardon, Madam," he cried, "my Impertinence; but you have now reſtored "me to Life. I beheld you in the Garden, "and was reſolved, before I left your "Houſe, to acquaint you, that if you do "not honour me with your Regard, I ſhall "be the moſt unhappy among Mankind. "You are the firſt of your Sex that ever "made an Impreſſion upon my Heart; and "I hope my Character and Fortune will be "no Bar to my Pretenſions. Though ſo "early a Declaration may not ſeem con-"ſiſtent with my own Prudence, or the "Decorum due, Madam, to you; yet "believe me, 'tis ſincere; and your Anſwer "will either raiſe me to the Summit of "earthly Happineſs, or ſink me into ever-"laſting Deſpair. If I am not miſtaken, "and ſure I cannot, this is a Reſemblance "of my Siſter, *Henrietta Worthy*. Sure, "Madam, you, that can feel ſo much Ten-"derneſs for the Siſter, will not cruelly "abandon the Brother to never-ceaſing "Torment." Here, with an admirable Grace, he took her fair Hand, and, before ſhe could withdraw it, imprinted on it many ardent Kiſſes. His Declaration, tho' ſo flattering to her Hopes, and what ſhe wiſhed for ſo earneſtly, threw her into Confuſion. She reflected how diſhonourable it would be, notwithſtanding Lady *Latimer*'s Aſſurances, to conceal her Want of Fortune, and her Uncertainty about her Family;

mily; the Sincerity, the unaffected Candour of his Declaration, ſhe thought, ought to meet with as honeſt and candid a Return; ſhe found already, that to contribute to his Happineſs could alone conſtitute her own, and ſhe was reſolved to conceal nothing that paſſed in her Boſom. Beſides his being the Object of her Wiſhes, he was the Son of Mr. *Worthy*, and the Brother of her dear *Henrietta*; and on thoſe Accounts was, ſhe thought, entitled to know all her Misfortunes.

"I am ſo great a Friend to Truth, Sir," ſhe anſwered, "that I ſhall not, from an "Affectation of Delicacy, conceal my Sen-"timents. I have a perfect Eſteem for you, "on Account of the good Qualities you "are Maſter of. Your Worth, your "Honour, your Virtue, all conſpire with "my Gratitude, to prepoſſeſs me in your "Favour: Beſide, you are nearly rela-"ted to my deareſt Friend; of a Family "to which I have unmerited Obligations; "and I do not heſitate to declare, that "you are the firſt Man that ever excited "my Tenderneſs: But, alas! Sir, there are "many Conſiderations that I fear will con-"tribute to render your Addreſſes to me "improper.—You miſtake, if you think I "am what the Generoſity and Bounty of "the worthy Lady *Latimer* would beſpeak "me. I have no Fortune,—am the "Child of her Bounty;—by her reſcued "from Diſtreſs;—by her ſupported!—I

"do not even know to whom I owe my "Birth;---though I have Reaſon to think "the Rank of my Parents would be no "Diſgrace to me. Early I was ſubjected "to Misfortunes; not a few of which were "brought on me by the unworthy Noble-"man from whom you reſcued me Yeſter-"day. Can I, Sir, then---dare I give you, "---indulge myſelf in any Hope?---No: "For me are prepared nothing but fruitleſs "Wiſhes,---unavailing Regrets,---Tears, "---Sighs,---and Anguiſh unutterable!" ---Her Paſſions were ſo overbearing, her Heart ſo full,---that ſhe could ſay no more; but holding her Handkerchief to her Eyes, endeavoured to dry the Tears, that perforce rolled down her lovely Cheeks, whilſt Sighs burſt inceſſantly from her Breaſt.

By this Time they had got into the Gar-den, in a cloſe ſhady Walk, remote from any Obſervation, and *Worthy*, wonderfully affected with what he heard, even wept himſelf at this Apoſtrophe of the charming Fair:---"Misfortune!" he cried,---"can "Misfortune have attacked the moſt accom-"pliſhed of her Sex; the lovelieſt,---the "beſt!---Who then will ever depend upon "Happineſs!---Thou kind, thou amiably "ſincere Creature! how ſhall I enough "adore thy Goodneſs, which, even when "you ſhew ſuch Tokens of Sorrow, is able "to raiſe my Soul to a Pitch of extrava-"gant Joy? Oh! Madam,---what you "have mentioned as deſtructive of my

"Hopes,

"Hopes, on the contrary, will rather double "my Efforts to pleaſe and ſerve you!--- "Alas! every Perfection of Perſon and "Mind declare your Parentage to be illuſ- "trious: But ſuppoſe it were otherwiſe, 'tis "to you ſimply, without conſidering Fa- "mily or Fortune, that I addreſs my Vows, "and from you I hope every earthly Hap- "pineſs. My Love is too refined to be "abated by any thing you can urge, whilſt "ſo many Charms adorn your lovely Face, "ſuch noble Sentiments dwell in that valu- "able Breaſt.---Dry thoſe Tears, my "Faireſt!---you have made me completely "happy!---If then you have been unfor- "tunate,---what Delight will it give to "your *Worthy*, to efface every bitter Re- "gret, by a Life of Aſſiduity to pleaſe "and oblige; by pouring the Balm of "Comfort into your lovely Boſom,---by "diſplaying, to the lateſt Moment of my "Life, my unalterable Affection to the beſt "and deareſt of her Sex!---My Fortune "will be equal to all our Wiſhes; permit "me then, Madam, to purſue my Inclina- "tions, which ſeem inſpired by Heaven it- "ſelf, and which nothing in this World ſhall "ever induce me to relinquiſh."

They were too near the Houſe for *Maria* to reply to this generous Speech, otherwiſe than by a Look of ſuch grateful Tenderneſs, as was more emphatical than the ſtrongeſt Expreſſions, and penetrated to his very Soul.

CHAP. XX.

Alteration in Lord Belvidere.---*His Meſſage, Acknowledgement, and Forgiveneſs.---He relates an intereſting Event.*

LADY *Latimer* had juſt left her Chamber, as they entered the Dining-Room, who rallied them with her uſual Pleaſantry, upon ſeeing them enter together. She informed them ſhe had heard by *Lætitia*, that *Belvidere* was much better, and had recovered his Speech---"And ſee here, *Maria*, "here is a Letter from a Friend, whom I "ſuppoſed in *London*, or in a diſtant Coun-"try, but who, it ſeems, is nearer to us; in "which ſhe informs me, your old Enemy, "the Earl of *Beaumont*, is dead; conſequent-"ly we have a Man of greater Quality un-"der our Roof than we were aware of. "There is ſomewhat in the Letter that re-"lates to that Gentleman too: Read it, "my *Maria*." *Worthy* ſeemed eager to hear it, and *Maria* could not tell what to think, till ſhe read as follows:

My dear Lady.

IF frequent Illneſs of myſelf, and in my Family, and not having for ſome Years been at our Houſe in *Berkſhire*, did not afford me ſome Excuſe, I ſhould be aſhamed at the long Time that has elapſed

elapſed ſince I had the Happineſs to ſee you; to which your unalterable Reſolution of not coming to *London*, alſo ſo much contributed. I ſhould have obeyed your kind Summons ſooner, but Mr. *Welldone* has engaged our good Neighbour and Friend Mr. *Worthy*, and his Family alſo, to wait upon your Ladyſhip, and I tarried for them. Mr. *Welldone* and Mr. *Worthy* have lately been up to *London* with Colonel *Beaumont*, a Gentleman you will, I am ſure, highly admire, who is a Son of the Earl of *Beaumont*, yet, I aſſure you, has none of his Father's bad Qualities, of which, as he never ſtrove to conceal them, no doubt your Ladyſhip muſt have heard. He has now paid his Debt to Nature, and as unworthy a Son ſucceeds him in Title and Eſtate, if any Eſtate remains. His amiable Brother has this Day joined us, after paying the laſt Duties to his Parent; but knows not where the new Earl is, who has not appeared in *London* a great while. The Colonel is going ſoon to be married to the charming *Henrietta Worthy*; that is to ſay, as ſoon as her Brother, whom we all long to ſee, arrives; and as he landed at *Dover* a Week ſince, and his Servants are already here, we expect him every Hour. Our two Families are inſeparable, and your Ladyſhip muſt expect them all, as I obſerved, to bear me Company: I know *Latimer-Hall* is capacious enough for their Accommodation: I inſiſt

upon having to myſelf my old Apartment, that with the Chintz Furniture.

God knows, my dear Lady, I partake of the Satisfaction of my Friends with much Sincerity; but the old Worm ſtill gnaws my Breaſt, and ever will, I fear: Therefore your Ladyſhip, I hope, will ſuffer me now and then to ſigh, and ſhed a Tear, which ſhall be as privately, and as ſeldom, as poſſible.

I am,
Dear Madam,
Your Ladyſhip's
Moſt affectionate Friend,
And moſt humble Servant,
FRANCES WELLDONE.

"My dear Lady," ſaid young *Worthy*, "you are acquainted, I perceive, with all "my good Friends!---How happy it "makes me!---I hope your Ladyſhip will "admit me to wait upon you with them?" "Or elſe," returned ſhe, looking archly at *Maria*, "that young Lady, I fear, will "lead me a weary Life." *Maria* bluſhed, and *Worthy* bowed, and replied, "I will "hide nothing from you, Madam, and beg "your Intereſt.---I love your adopted "Daughter with the ſincereſt Paſſion, and, "if ſhe kindly returns my Affection, ſhall "be the happieſt of Mortals."—"Don't "tell me, Sir," returned Lady *Latimer*, laughing, "I'll have nothing to do with "you.—We ſhall have your Father and

"Mother

"Mother here, and ſhall ſee what they "ſay to it.—Come, come," (ſeeing *Maria* look very ſerious) "don't be uneaſy, my "Dear.—I cannot conceive a Couple more "ſuited to each other;—I would not have "you ſeparated, if your Union were to "coſt me the Half of my Eſtate."

Mr. *Worthy* ran and kiſſed her Hand in a Tranſport of Joy, and *Maria*, flinging herſelf on her Knees before her, ſaid, "Oh! "Madam! how ſhall I ſupport all this "Goodneſs! Teach me, Oh! Heaven, "ſome Way yet unknown, to prove my "Senſe of ſo many unmerited Favours."—"So we are all in our Raptures now, I "find," ſaid the old Lady, raiſing her, and claſping her in her Arms: "But, by "and by, here will be your Friends Mrs. "*Worthy* and Miſs *Henrietta*, and then "you'll forget me, I'm afraid."—"Can "you have ſuch a Thought, my Lady?" returned *Maria* very gravely: "Such baſe "Ingratitude can never harbour in a Bo-"ſom like mine."—"I believe you, my "Child," ſaid the good Lady, "don't "look ſo ſerious; you muſt admit me to "be merry: My Spirits are all up at the "Thoughts of ſeeing my good Mrs. *Well-*"*done* and her Friends; and, perhaps—"but I ſhall not explain myſelf, a Friend "of yours, or two, that you little expect to "ſee; or elſe I am much out in my Con-"jectures."

The few Days of Mr. *Worthy*'s Stay were ſpent in the utmoſt Felicity: At length the Time came for him to take his Leave; They ſaw him on Horſeback, and *Maria* and he parted, with a Solemnity that added greatly to Lady *Latimer*'s Good-Humour.

As to Miſs *Lætitia*, ſhe was now ſo taken up with her Attendance on Lord *Beaumont*, as we ſhall begin to call him, that ſhe ſeldom appeared, but at Meal-Time; and in about two Days the Vigour of his Conſtitution, and the Skill of the Surgeon, enabled him to ſit up, and walk about his Chamber. The generous Manner he had been treated in had very much altered his Temper: He ſpoke of his Attempt with ſome Degree of Compunction, and the more, as he began to think ſeriouſly of a Union with *Lætitia*, who, by her Aunt's Directions, had informed him of his Father's Death, which ſhocked him greatly, and that his Brother was ſoon expected at *Latimer-Hall*. Upon ſuch Diſpoſitions as his, nothing but Pain or Misfortune will operate with any Effect; and in this State of Contrition he begged *Lætitia* to procure him a Viſit from her Aunt and *Maria*, tho' he ſaid he ſhould be aſhamed to ſee them.

The good old Lady readily complied with his Requeſt, and begged *Maria* to bear her Company. "Come, Child," ſays ſhe, "let us ſee this Deſperado; if we can ſave "him from Perdition by our Preſence and "Inſtructions, let us do it. We muſt re-

"member,

" member, with all his Crimes, that he is our " Fellow-Creature, and merits our Com- " paſſion: It is out of his Power ever to " perſecute thee again."

As they entered his Chamber, however, *Maria* turned pale, her Knees trembled under her, and ſhe needed the old Lady's Arm to ſupport her; her Spirits were ſo affected with former Remembrances.

He was ſitting with *Lætitia*, and, riſing as ſoon as he ſaw them, attempted to ſtand; but his Weakneſs not permitting him, fell back again in his Chair.

" My Lord," ſays Lady *Latimer*, " I hope " you have had Time to reflect upon the " Enormity of your Conduct. How happy " the fatal Ball did not put an End to your " Exiſtence, before you had Time to re- " pent, and make Atonement for your Of- " fences!—But we will drop this Subject: " I hope your own Reflections have ſug- " geſted more than I can ſay. I am glad you " are ſo much recovered, and hope you will " ſoon be able to go abroad."

Lord *Beaumont*, who did not want Underſtanding, though it had been little cultivated, replied, " I ſee, Madam, my Crimes " in the Light you would wiſh; particu- " larly my vile Attempts upon that young " Lady. Miſs *Maria*, can you forgive a " Man who has cauſed you ſo much Unea- " ſineſs and Pain? Were I able, I would " kneel for your Forgiveneſs, and from this " Moment (I dare not ſay upon my Ho-

" nour,

" nour, it has been too often forfeited!) I " ſwear I will never diſturb you more. " You have ſuffered indeed too much from " my Family already; but you will allow " your tranſcendent Beauty, and the Aver- " ſion you always ſhewed me, to be ſome " ſmall Excuſe; for, under all Appearan- " ces, I loved you more than I can expreſs. " Do, generous Maid, forgive me! that " will more than any thing contribute to " my Recovery; and, my Lady," turn- ing to her, " let me crave your Forgiveneſs " alſo, for my rude Behaviour, for the " Terror I put you in, and for my Viola- " tion of that Reſpect which is due to you " from all that know your Character."

This Humiliation was attended with ſuch apparent Sincerity, that it affected *Maria* exceedingly: Her gentle Soul was moved, and forgetting all that had paſſed, ſhe ſaid, " My Lord, I would not deny you what " you requeſt with ſo true a Senſe of your " Errors and Follies. I forgive you, and " hope your future Behaviour will oblite- " rate every diſagreeable Impreſſion your " Conduct has occaſioned. My Lord, may " your Father's Death induce you ſeriouſly " to think of amending your Life, before " you have treſpaſſed too far againſt of- " fended Deity, who will aſſuredly, one " Time or other, avenge the Indignities " offered to his Majeſty, and the Tranſ- " greſſions of thoſe Precepts which conſti- " tute the Happineſs and Safety of Society."

—" And

—" And I, my Lord, after ſo amiable an " Example," cried her Ladyſhip, " do " alſo forgive you: So now, ſet your Mind " at Eaſe;—it is in your Power to make " Friends of thoſe who deteſted you. Your " worthy Brother, whoſe Example I hope " you will imitate, will ſoon be here, and " I would have the Earl of *Beaumont* ho- " nour us with his Preſence. My Lord, " by your preſent Temper of Mind,—pray " God it continue,—you may conciliate " the Eſteem of Perſons able to ſerve you, " and to remove thoſe Difficulties under " which I know you labour.—You are " ſenſible we could proſecute you with Suc- " ceſs, ſeeing, whatever be the Rank and " Quality of a Man, he can never break the " Laws of this Kingdom with Impunity! " Thank Heaven! we live in a Country " where the Liberty and Property of the " meaneſt Subject is as ſacred as that of the " moſt elevated. On your Account, and " for the ſake of his good Mother, I ſhall " wave any Proſecution againſt Sir *Thomas* " *Jones*, our Neighbour; and I hope, my " Lord, you will endeavour to inſpire him " with the ſame Sentiments you have en- " tertained yourſelf.—One Thing, my " Lord, let me beg you to be ingenuous " in; pray how did you get *Maria* into " your Cuſtody after ſhe fled from Mr. " *Worthy*'s?"

Lord *Beaumont* thanked *Maria* and her Ladyſhip for their condeſcending Goodneſs, in

in a Manner that convinced them their Forgiveneſs was very acceptable to him; and, in anſwer to her Ladyſhip's Queſtion, ſaid, that one Mr. *Caſwall*, a looſe Companion of his, to whom he had unboſomed himſelf in relation to his Loſs of *Maria*, informed him in what Manner ſhe was to be betrayed by Mrs. *Worthy*'s Maid into his Hands; upon which he promiſed him fifty Guineas to convey her to a Tenant's of his near *Acton*, who, with his Wife, was prepared for the Purpoſe; that his removing her from thence to *Holmes*'s was in order to have an Opportunity, by Sir *Thomas Jones*'s Means, of conveying her to a lone Houſe of his in *Oxfordſhire*, where he imagined he ſhould meet with no Oppoſition to his Deſigns. But Heaven, he ſaid, protected the Innocent, and, even when moſt inflamed with Liquor, inſpired him with ſuch Awe of *Maria*'s ſuperior Virtue, that he never dared to appear before her Face to Face. And the Inſtrument that put her into his Hands, *Caſwall*, he underſtood, had been killed by his Brother Col. *Beaumont*, in an Attempt to violate a young Lady, whom he had decoyed to a Bagnio for that Purpoſe; which indeed had given him ſome Shock when he heard it; but he owned that his Wound, the Death of his Father, and the ſhameful Treatment of her Ladyſhip, with her late Kindneſs to him, were the firſt Motives to an Alteration of his Mind, and Reſolution to forſake his bad Courſes.

Maria

Maria was astonished at this Recital, and adored that Providence that had so visibly avenged her, and by the Hand of the Brother of her Persecutor! They then took Leave of the Earl, *Lætitia* staying with him, pleased with what they had heard, and wishing he might continue in his present Resolutions.

CHAP. XXI.

Young Worthy *arrives at his Father's.---Makes an interesting Discovery.---His Declaration, and his Father's Reply.---Their Journey to* London, *and Reason of it.*

MR. *Worthy* soon traversed the Distance between Lady *Latimer's* and his Father's Seat, and was received by his Parents and Sister with all those Testimonies of Affection his Relation and Merits deserved. As to Col. *Beaumont*, the young Gentleman and he contracted a Friendship in a very few Days, created by similar Inclinations and Tempers; and Mr. *Worthy* was charmed with the Prospect of cementing that Union still closer, by his Marriage with *Henrietta*, a Match which he highly approved. The Day after his Arrival, his Return was celebrated by his Friends and the Tenants, and open House was kept for all

all Comers and Goers, with a Munificence peculiar to the Family. Mr. *Welldone* and Mrs. *Welldone* came to partake of their Friends Satisfaction, and in the Afternoon they all retired to ſpend a few Hours, in a beautiful Saloon at the Bottom of the Garden, in ſocial Converſe. Amongſt other Chit-chat, the younger *Worthy* gave an Account of his Travels, and diſplayed his Underſtanding by the ſage Obſervations he made on the Manners and Cuſtoms of *Italy* and *France*, and other Matters. He then condoled with Col. *Beaumont* on the Death of his Father, and was going to ſurpriſe him with Intelligence where his Brother at preſent reſided; when Miſs *Henrietta* ſaid, with a Sigh, addreſſing herſelf to her Father, "We have now, Sir, nothing to "wiſh for in this Company but, on our "Sides, the Recovery of my poor, dear *Ma-*"*ria*; on that of our Friends, that of their "long-loſt Daughter; both, alas! I fear, "at a great Diſtance, or impoſſible; and "on the Colonel's, finding out Lord *Beau-*"*mont*, who, unworthy as he is, is ſtill his "Brother." Young Mr. *Worthy*, pleaſed to hear this, replied, "As to two of your "Wiſhes, perhaps I may be able to gratify "them, Gentle-folks; but firſt, Madam," turning to Mrs. *Welldone*, "let me diſ-"charge a Commiſſion to you. Lady *La-*"*timer* promiſes that you ſhall have full "Poſſeſſion of the Room with the Chintz "Furniture, without any Interruption."

Mrs.

Mrs. *Welldone*, ſurpriſed at what ſhe heard, returned, "Pray, Mr. *Worthy*, how came "you acquainted with Lady *Latimer?* and "as your Acquaintance muſt be very ſhort, "how came you ſo much in her Confidence, "as to be made acquainted with a private "Letter to her from a Friend?"

"In anſwer to all your Queſtions," ſaid young *Worthy*, "and to gratify, as I ſaid, "two of the three Wiſhes, (and happy ſhould "I be, could I alſo gratify the third,—that "indeed would complete our Felicity) I muſt "relate an Adventure that I was engaged in "a few Days ſince, and which, in the Event, "I find, will intereſt moſt of us."

All was Wonder and Silence, when the young Gentleman related the Manner in which he had reſcued *Maria* out of the Hands of Lord *Beaumont*; his wounding that Nobleman; his after kind Entertainment at Lady *Latimer*'s, and, in fine, his diſcovering *Maria* as ſhe contemplated *Henrietta*'s Picture. He then added, addreſſing his Father and Mother, "You muſt know "well the Perfections of the beautiful, the "amiable *Maria*; but no body has, per-"haps, felt their Power ſo much as myſelf. "Oh! Sir, Madam," turning to his Father and Mother, "uncertain as ſhe ſays ſhe "is of her Parentage, with every other ſin-"cere and mortifying Declaration ſhe made "to check my Flame, you behold but a "Part of your Son here; his Heart he has "left with the dear Creature at Lady *La-*

"*timer*'s.

" *timer*'s. Thus, after ſeeing ſo many " Beauties, I return to your Embraces " without any foreign Attachment; but if " *Maria*'s Graces ever tranſported you, as " I'm ſure they muſt all that behold them, " and if you prize your Son's Happineſs, " let the lovely Maid be mine; in her So- " ciety my Heart would be ſatisfied; by a " ſoft Union with her Virtues, my own " would increaſe; and my Attachment to " the Rules of Prudence and Œconomy " ſhall ever compenſate for her Want of " Fortune. Whoever her Parents were, I " have the utmoſt Reaſon to ſuppoſe them " People of Worth; ſeldom ſo many re- " ſplendent Virtues warm the Breaſts of " the Vulgar. But if Want of Fortune " be, after what I have ſaid, any Objec- " tion, ſhe is ſo adored by Lady *Latimer*, " that ſhe generouſly promiſed me the Half " of her Eſtate, rather than we ſhould be " made unhappy. My Time was too " much taken up with the tender Concerns " of my Heart, to aſk her to relate her " Story; but it muſt be extraordinary, and " the Love and Reſpect with which ſhe " ſpoke of my Family and Siſter, though I " cannot tell whence they aroſe, ſtill the " more endeared her to me." Here he ceaſed; and the Company were ſo abſorbed by their ſeveral Cogitations, that for ſome Time no one replied. At length, *Henrietta* firſt broke Silence, after a ſolemn Lifting-up her Hands and Eyes to Heaven. Running

to

to her Brother, and claſping her Arms about his Neck, ſhe exclaimed, "This News, "indeed, will make us happy! Methinks, "my dear Brother, I love you ſtill more "than ever, for loving my *Maria*.--- "What an almoſt miraculous Deliverance! "How I hate her Perſecutor, whom yet I "ought to love!---Oh! the dear Crea- "ture!---Did ſhe then think of her *Hen-* "*rietta!*---Alas! her *Henrietta* never for "one Day forgot her, and prayed perpe- "tually to Heaven for her Preſervation." Mr. *Welldone* and his Lady looked at each other with a ſeeming Kind of Anxiety at the Account given of *Maria*, which reminded them of their Daughter, and Lady *Lati-* *mer*'s late Invitation now appeared to them to have ſome Relation to *Maria*. Col. *Beaumont* was delighted that his *Henrietta* would now recover the Loſs ſhe had mourn- ed ſo much; not diſpleaſed with his Bro- ther's Puniſhment, but glad to know where he was, and that now Juſtice would be done to *Maria*, according to his Father's dying Requeſt, and Mr. *Worthy*'s Promiſe. As to Mr. *Worthy*, he had various delight- ful Proſpects before him, which he did not chuſe to communicate at preſent; and there- fore had kept ſome Part of the late Lord *Beaumont*'s Account of *Maria* even from his Lady; and ſhe, who had long been con- vinced of her Foible, was as much pleaſed as her Daughter, nay, more; becauſe ſhe had

had now an Opportunity to make *Maria* Amends for her unjuſt Suſpicions.

Mr. *Worthy*, addreſſing himſelf to his Son, replied, "My dear Son, you cannot yet "know fully what real Tranſport you muſt "cauſe to every one here, by your Reſcue "and Diſcovery of Miſs *Maria*. I love "her already with the Fondneſs of a Pa-"rent; and though ſhe ſhould never find "her Parents, your Mother and myſelf "would ſtand in that Relation to her; and "it delights me, that, by your provident-"tial Attachment to her, we ſhall be really "ſo. I know of no Lady that is qualified "to make you ſo happy; and, with ſin-"cere Delight, we give our Conſent that "you purſue your Addreſſes.---That good "Lady *Latimer!* often I have heard her "Character; but it is raiſed, in my Opi-"nion, to the higheſt Luſtre, by her Be-"nevolence to that poor ſuffering Maid."

"Let us then," cried Mrs. *Welldone*, "To-morrow Morning pay our Viſit; I "now long to ſee her more than ever."---"One Thing, Gentlemen and Ladies," replied Mr. *Worthy*, "I muſt inſiſt upon; "that, before we ſet out for *Latimer-Hall*, "you ſuffer my Son and myſelf to go to "*London*; I have ſomewhat to carry to "Lady *Latimer*'s from thence, that, tho' "I am not acquainted with her, I am ſure, "from what I hear of her benevolent Heart, "muſt be very agreeable to her."

With ſome Difficulty this Requeſt was granted,

granted, and the next Morning they ſet out for their Town-Houſe, after many Charges not to ſtay longer than neceſſary. In their Journey, Mr. *Worthy* gave his Son an Account of what had paſſed relating to *Maria* between him and the late Earl of *Beaumont*, and the Manner of his firſt meeting with, and the Reaſons of her Flight from his Houſe; with what had happened to *Henrietta*, and the conſequent Affection produced between her and Col. *Beaumont*; adding, "You could not have given me "more Satisfaction, than to aſſure me that "you love the amiable Creature; not only "as you are worthy each other, at it will "recompenſe her for the Uneaſineſs ſhe ſuf-"fered at my Houſe, and place her in a "Situation her Virtues ſo well deſerve; but "as it gives me an Opportunity of indul-"ging my Affection to a Lady, who, at "firſt Sight, excited all the Tenderneſs of "my Nature."

After having ſent down into *Berkſhire* what Mr. *Worthy* came to Town for, they ſet out for their Seat again, where they were eagerly expected. The Ladies were particularly curious to know what the Preſent for Lady *Latimer* conſiſted of, which was contained in a Deal-Box, well corded and ſecured; but Mr. *Worthy*, laughing, told them they muſt ſuſpend their Curioſity till they arrived at *Latimer-Hall*; and even then, perhaps, he might not let them into the Secret.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

The two Families of Weldones *and* Worthies *ſet out for* Latimer-Hall.—*Their Arrival and Reception.*—*Affecting Diſcoveries.*—*Lady* Latimer's *Generoſity.*—*The Concluſion.*

THE Day after the Arrival of the Father and Son, the whole Company departed for *Latimer-Hall*, Mr. *Welldone* and his Lady, Mr. *Worthy*, his Spouſe and Daughter, in their Coaches and Six, young Mr. *Worthy* and Col. *Beaumont* on Horſeback, with a grand Retinue of Servants; and though they travelled with great Celerity, yet they thought it an Age till they arrived within View of the venerable Manſion. Lady *Latimer*, willing to give *Maria* ſome Time to prepare herſelf, and to calm her Spirits, which were put into a perfect Flutter when ſhe heard they were come, left her in the Dining-Room, and received her Viſitants at the Gate as they alighted. Mrs. *Welldone* threw herſelf into her Arms, and they exchanged thoſe Endearments ſo uſual when long-abſent valued Friends meet. Mr. *Welldone*, after expreſſing his Satisfaction to ſee her Ladyſhip look ſo well, introduced the *Worthies* to her, whom ſhe received with a more than ordinary Reſpect,

as

as ſhe did the Colonel. "This young "Gentleman," pointing to young *Worthy*, ſays he, "I find, can introduce himſelf." "Ay, ay," returned her Ladyſhip ſmiling, "he's our Deliverer; but I aſſure you he "has broke through the Laws of Hoſpita- "lity, and, though I treated him ſo kindly, "took away with him, I find, what I va- "lued more than any thing I poſſeſſed---- "my *Maria*'s Heart. Is not he an arrant "Pilferer? But ſome body elſe ſhall puniſh "him for it; ſhe waits above for that Pur- "poſe." "You remember the old Say- "ing, my Lady," returned the young Gentleman, "Exchange is no Robbery; "if I carried away a Heart, I left one in "Return, and am now come to place it at "your Ladyſhip's Feet." "What a fine "Woman Lady *Latimer* has been!" whiſ- pered *Henrietta* to Mrs. *Welldone*, "and what "engaging Good-nature and Benevolence "ſit upon her Countenance!" "Ay, "Child," that Lady returned, "ſhe is an "Example to us all, of conjugal and ma- "ternal Duty and Affection, and of every "Virtue that can adorn the Human Soul."

They were now conducted into the Di- ning-Room, all anxious to ſee the lovely Maid, who had cauſed them ſo much Diſ- turbance. She was ſtanding in an elegant Undreſs, when the Servants threw open the Folding-Doors to admit the Company. *Henrietta*, the Moment ſhe ſaw her, ran to- wards her; they met, and, in ſpeechleſs

Tranſport, ſunk into each other's Arms. "My *Henrietta!*"---"My dear *Maria!*" were the only articulate Sounds that could be diſtinguiſhed in this Tumult of joyous Rapture. With Difficulty they ſeparated, ſtill fondly gazing at each other, Mrs. *Worthy* advancing to have her Share of the charming *Maria*, whom ſhe embraced with the utmoſt Affection, and ſaid, "My Dear, "forgive the Injury I did you,---the many "Misfortunes my ſilly Behaviour expoſed "you to; but I am myſelf again, and your "future Peace will meet with no Interrup-"tion." "My deareſt Benefactreſs," ſhe replied, "you make me completely happy "by this Goodneſs!---It ſhall be the Study "of my Life to deſerve it!---Indeed, Ma-"dam, I always loved you."---*Maria* then, with a Vivacity that charmed all the Company, and authoriſed, as ſhe thought herſelf, by Mrs. *Worthy*'s Behaviour, advancing to Mr. *Worthy*, before that Gentleman could prevent her, flung herſelf on her Knees before him, crying, "Oh! Sir, my Bene-"factor, Preſerver, and beſt Friend! how "——" She had not Time to proceed; for, moved and ſurpriſed at her Action, he raiſed her in his Arms, and ſaid, "Ah! my "dear Child!---this Moment repays me for "all I have ſuffered on thy Account;--- "but 'tis over;---future Hours ſhall re-"compenſe thee for all thy Misfortunes! "My dear, my deſtined Daughter!---my "lovely *Maria!*"—He then tenderly embracing

bracing her over and over, led her to Mr. and Mrs. *Welldone*, ſaying, "See, my "Friends,—behold the Object of our Con- "cern; for whoſe Loſs you have often ſym- "pathiſed with us!"—They had both beheld all that paſſed, with indeſcribable Emotions; the Circumſtances of *Maria*'s Story, ſo much like that of their long-loſt Child, the Grace and Beauty that appeared in all her Actions, and in her Perſon, drew Tears from their Eyes. Mr. *Welldone* ſaluted her fondly; but as to his Lady, ſhe perfectly devoured her with Kiſſes; and, by an Impulſe, which neither could prevent, though unacquainted before, and amazing to Part of the Company, uſed ſuch tender Epithets to each other, as were due only to the neareſt Relations. Lady *Latimer* beheld this Sight with true Satisfaction, as did Mr. *Worthy*, who had both their Reaſons for being particular in their Obſervations.

Henrietta afterwards ſaid, leading her Brother and the Colonel to her, "See, my *Maria*, "here's a ſighing Swain of yours, it ſeems, "and another of mine, that long, I perceive, "to pay their Reſpects to you." Young *Worthy* kiſſed her Hand, and the Looks they exchanged, with the Bluſhes that covered her Cheeks, were a plain Indication of the Delight they experienced in this Meeting. Colonel *Beaumont* begged her to afford him a Place in her Eſteem, though ſo nearly related to her Enemies; and added, he hoped his Union with her *Henrietta* would

entitle him to her Friendſhip. He was going on in this polite Strain, interſperſed with ſome ſevere Reflections on his Brother's Conduct, when Lady *Latimer* ſaid, "Sir, "I muſt beg you to ceaſe all Invectives "againſt his Lordſhip; he has expreſſed "his Sorrow, and aſked *Maria*'s Pardon, "with ſo much ſeeming Sincerity, that we "have the higheſt Hopes of his thorough "Reformation." She then related the Particulars of the late Interview, and added, "We muſt not, by repeating Grievances, "give any Check to his good Reſolutions. "Let us receive him into our Circle, and "not by a diſtant or ſuſpicious Behaviour "retard, but by friendly and Chriſtian "Means haſten, his perfect Return to "Virtue."

Every body applauded her Ladyſhip's Propoſal, and the Colonel and young Mr. *Worthy* then paid him a Viſit, and found him in the Situation of Mind ſhe deſcribed. He told Mr. *Worthy*, he had, by inflicting the Wound which had confined him, been of more real Service to him than Words could expreſs; he behaved with much Reſpect to his Brother, and approved all he had done relative to their joint Executorſhip of their Father's Affairs, and apologized, as well as he could, for his Abſence on the melancholy Occaſion of his Death. Whilſt the Gentlemen were in his Chamber, *Lætitia* and *Lucy* were introduced, the former received with the Regard due to her Re-

lation

lation to Lady *Latimer*, and the latter careſſed by them for her Virtue and Friendſhip to *Maria*, of which ſhe had given them a ſhort Detail.

The reſt of this firſt Day was ſpent in mutual Enquiries, Felicitations, and Condolements upon the Diſpenſations of Providence to them, either proſperous or afflictive. Mr. *Worthy* took an Opportunity to relate privately to Lady *Latimer* and *Maria*, what had paſſed between the late Earl of *Beaumont*, the Colonel, and himſelf, in his laſt Moments, and told the latter that he had the valuable Tokens of her Parents then in his Cuſtody. The amiable Maid expreſſed her Sorrow at his dying in ſuch an agitated State of Mind; but told Mr. *Worthy*, ſhe ſhould forget as well as forgive his Behaviour to her, and pray for that Mercy he had implored.

Every thing now wore the Marks of Joy at *Latimer-Hall*, where the Servants of theſe welcome Viſitors and her Ladyſhip's formed a numerous Family, who were entertained with that chearful Hoſpitality ſo peculiar to the Miſtreſs of that Manſion.

After Dinner, when they were all ſitting together, at Mr. *Worthy*'s Deſire, *Henrietta* related her Adventure with *Caſwall*; and *Maria*, what had occurred to her, ſince ſhe had left that Gentleman's Houſe, which mightily affected the Hearers. *Maria* preſſed the Hands of *Henrietta*, lamented her Danger, and bleſſed her Reſcuer; and, turning to the

Colonel, ſaid, his Deliverance of her Friend eraſed from her Mind every Misfortune that had been brought upon her by his Father and Brother.

And now Mr. *Worthy* deſired *Maria* to relate her Adventures from the Time ſhe could remember, to her being taken by Lord *Beaumont* to his Houſe. She complied, and ſilent Attention was impreſſed upon her intereſted Auditors. She began in much the ſame Manner ſhe had before told her Story to Lady *Latimer*; but when ſhe came to the Circumſtance of her being brought from *Beſançon* to *Douay*, and mentioned the Mantle, Pillow, and Cradle-Quilt, Mrs. *Welldone*, wildly gazing at her, was riſing to claſp her in her Arms; but fell down at her Feet in a Swoon, crying,---"Oh! "gracious Being!---My long-loſt Daugh-"ter!"---Immediately all was Confuſion. ---*Maria*, who had remarked her Words, and beheld her Action, with Senſations not to be deſcribed, knelt down by her, and, flinging her Arms round her Neck, and bedewing her Face with Tears, exclaimed, ---"Heavens! what do I hear! my Mo-"ther! Is it poſſible? Oh!---" and overpowered, fainted beſide her. Mr. *Welldone*, with a Look of tender Impatience, mingled with Dread and Fear, knelt by them, and alternately taking each in his Arms, was unable to ſpeak. The Aſſiſtants at this affecting Scene endeavoured to recover the two Ladies, in an amazed Suſpenſe, look-

ing

ing at each other; wiſhing, yet doubting what they heard were Reality. Mr. *Welldone* was deſired to be ſeated; but he fell on his Knees, and in a warm Ejaculation returned Thanks to the Divine Being for a Miracle, as he ſtiled it, wrought in his Favour. At length the two Ladies recovered; but it was long before they could be ſeparated from each other's Embraces. Mrs. *Welldone*, without regarding the Spectators, opened *Maria*'s lovely Boſom, and cried out, with remarkable Elevation, "'Tis "ſhe! Oh God! 'tis ſhe herſelf! my "dear, my ſuffering *Fanny!* Oh! Mr. "*Welldone!* ſee here the Mark in her Neck, "that indelible Mark that we have often "mentioned!"—There was, indeed, the exact Reſemblance of a Strawberry near her Left Breaſt. That Gentleman, then giving the diſtracted Beauty a thouſand Kiſſes, and alternately claſping the Daughter and the Mother in his Arms, tenderly repeated the endearing Epithets, "My *Fanny!*— "Oh! my Child!" *Maria* fell upon her Knees before them, exclaiming, "Dear "Parents!—Heaven then, at laſt, has re- "ſtored us to each other! May I ever con- "tinue to behave as my Duty obliges me! "may I wipe out of your Minds the pain- "ful Ideas my Loſs muſt have occaſioned." "And, Oh! my Child," returned the tranſported Parents, at the ſame Inſtant, "may we live to rejoice in thy Virtues and "thy Graces, and to make thee forget every

" Misfortune.—Our Heaven-preserved!—
" our bleſſed!—all-accompliſhed Daugh-
" ter!"

It would be a vain and idle Taſk to paint what followed; ſome Paſſions and Feelings ſurpaſs the Power of Expreſſion. The delighted Parents embraced Lady *Latimer*, the *Worthies*; bleſſed them, and thanked them for the Tenderneſs they had ſhewn to their Child. Thoſe Friends, who with full Hearts had contemplated this fortunate Diſcovery, congratulated them on their Felicity, in diſordered Starts of Expreſſion, which diſplayed their Agitation of their Spirits, and which had been ſo alternately raiſed and depreſſed at the wonderful Things they heard, and ſuch a Proof of the Divine Goodneſs, and the Force of natural Affection. At length, when all was a little calm, Mr. *Worthy* ſaid, having ſent for the Box into the Room, and opened it, " Here, Mrs. " *Welldone*, are thoſe intereſting Tokens, " the Mention of which was the firſt Step " to your preſent Happineſs. See, if you " remember them." " O! yes, yes; re-" member them! they are the ſame I gave " Mrs. *Blair*, that wicked Woman! They " were worked by theſe Fingers! Ah! " how providential that this further Proof " was preſerved!—Oh! Mr. *Welldone*, we " ſurely don't deſerve the Bleſſing we have " received; how often have we called in " queſtion the Juſtice of Heaven! Can a

" Life

"Life of future Penitence and Piety atone "for our Fault?"

This Circumſtance was almoſt inſupportable by the three moſt intereſted Parties, and the reſt of the Day was paſſed in Starts and Fits of Tenderneſs, and Devotion that prevented any regular and calm Converſation. Mrs. *Welldone* that Night deprived *Lucy* of her Bed-Fellow; ſhe could not bear her Daughter out of her Sight; and the whole Company retired to Reſt, full of Reflection upon the providential and amazing Events of the Day.

They were ſomewhat more compoſed the next Morning, and after Breakfaſt adjourned, by Conſent, to a pleaſant Summer Houſe in the Garden, there to hear the Sequel of *Maria*'s Narration, which had been ſo pleaſingly, though painfully, interrupted the preceding Day. What Gratitude her Parents expreſſed for the good Mrs. *Sergiſſon*, and Mrs. *Nelſon*, what Deteſtation of Lord *Beaumont* and his Son, may well be imagined. They afreſh teſtified their Senſe of Mr. *Worthy* and his Family's Goodneſs, and that of Lady *Latimer*, to their lovely Daughter. Mr. *Welldone* repeated thoſe Lines of the immortal *Addiſon*, which I have made the Motto of this Book: And afterwards Mr. *Worthy* related to the Company the Account the late Lord *Beaumont* had given him; his Penitence and Death, of which he had before informed his Son and Daughter, Lady

Latimer and *Maria*. This produced a long Diſcourſe upon the wretched Conſequences of Vice, and the Miſeries occaſioned in the World by Superſtition and Enthuſiaſm. "Then," ſaid Mr. *Welldone*, at the Cloſe of the Converſation, "we receive our Daugh-"ter, Thanks to that excellent Divine, "Dr. *Howard*, in all Things as we could "wiſh her in our fondeſt Moments. Such "Examples as that Gentleman and Mr. *Bur-*"*net* are yet, by the Goodneſs of Heaven, re-"ſerved to animate and invigorate the Cler-"gy in the Diſcharge of thoſe Duties which "are too generally neglected. I long to em-"brace and ſhew my Gratitude to them for "their invaluable Favours, and, with Lady "*Latimer*'s Leave, will diſpatch a Meſſenger "to deſire their Company." Her Ladyſhip ſignified her Approbation, and a Meſſenger was ſent accordingly. "And now," continued Mr. *Welldone*, turning to young *Worthy*, "thou excellent Youth, in *Maria*, "*Fanny*, I hardly can tell which of thoſe "Names is moſt pleaſing to me, you will "receive the Daughter of your Friend; and "our Families, ever united in Friendſhip "and Inclination, will now be joined to-"gether in firmer Bonds. To whom can "I, with ſo much Juſtice, give my Daugh-"ter, as to the Son of her Preſerver, the "Brother of her affectionate Friend, and "who has ſaved her Life and Honour him-"ſelf? She ſhall loſe nothing by her long "Detention from us;—her Fortune ſhall

"be

" be made equal to your Merits, equal to " the Affection we bear her." The amiable Youth teſtified his extreme Satisfaction; kiſſed his Hand, and that of his excellent Spouſe; and Mr. *Worthy*, Mrs. *Worthy*, and *Henrietta*, paid him their warmeſt Acknowledgments.

Lady *Latimer* inſiſted the Nuptials ſhould be celebrated at her Houſe; a Deſire they none of them could refuſe; and then ſhe ſurpriſed them, by telling Colonel *Beaumont* ſhe believed ſhe ſhould be induced to give him a Siſter-in-law. " *Lord Beaumont* and " my Niece," ſaid ſhe, " have a mutual " Liking for each other, and this Morn- " ing he has begged my Conſent to their " Union. I believe the Girl is virtuous, " and may be diſcreet enough for a Huſ- " band of Quality; and, perhaps, Matri- " mony may confirm what Misfortune has " begun, and render his Lordſhip again " reſpectable. I have heard of his Incum- " brances: As Three Thouſand Pounds will " be but a poor Pittance of a Fortune for " the Wife of a Man of his Rank, I am " determined to add Ten Thouſand Pounds " to it; and, if they behave ſo as to me- " rit my future Eſteem, I will leave her as " much more at my Deceaſe."

Such unexampled Generoſity met with the Returns it ſo much deſerved, both from the Colonel and Mr. *Worthy*, who could not help intereſting himſelf in the Proſperity of a Family into which his Daughter was about to

be

be married; and he declared, he proposed to pay off the Mortgages of the Earl's Estates, and to take the Management of them into his own Hands, till those Incumbrances were cleared.

"Well then, Gentlefolks," resumed Lady *Latimer*, "as we must consult our Law-"yers, if you please, Mr. *Worthy* and Mr. "*Welldone* shall order all those Matters to "be prepared, and I will give Instructions "to mine, who will be here To-morrow. "Mean-time we will enjoy our Pleasures, "and the Lovers will have an Opportunity "of sighing in the Groves, and beside the "murmuring Streams, which so plentifully "adorn, and water my Plains. We shall "have Dr. *Howard* and Mr. *Burnet* here, "and may then secure them that Felicity "they have so much at Heart."

Her Ladyship's Advice met with general Assent, and the next Day the two Gentlemen went to give the necessary Instructions, as did Lady *Latimer*, to her Attorney.

The Ladies and Gentlemen amused themselves with such Diversions, as suited their several Tastes. Young Mr. *Worthy* and his *Maria*, the Colonel and *Henrietta*, Lord *Beaumont* and *Lætitia* (now making a Part of the Company, and all former Faults obliterated), had Time to render themselves still more dear to each other. The pleasing Gardens, the extensive Park, and the surrounding Country, afforded them every Opportunity to recreate themselves, and the soft

ſoft Vows that interchangeably paſſed at *Latimer-Hall* will ever render that delightful Manſion dear to theſe Lovers.

Dr. *Howard* and Mr. *Burnet*, and his Daughter, joined the illuſtrious Society, and partook of their Felicity. Mr. *Welldone* had a good Living to beſtow, which he conferred on the Dean, and which fortunately happened to be near his own. Mr. *Worthy* made a Preſent of a Thouſand Guineas to Miſs *Burnet*, and promiſed her Father the firſt Living, in his Gift, that fell. Young Mr. *Worthy* took upon him to reward Mrs. *Griffiths* for her Honeſty, and her uſeful Intelligence to *Maria*; nor did he forget to beſtow Marks of his Generoſity on Farmer *Holmes* and his Son. As to *Lucy*, ſhe was ſupremely happy in the Promiſe *Maria* made her, always to keep her about her Perſon, and the Aſſurances ſhe gave her of her conſtant Love and Friendſhip.

And now, all Things being prepared, and the Writings executed, the Day, the eagerly-expected Day, arrived, which was to unite theſe Lovers in indiſſoluble Bands. The Dreſſes of the Brides and Bridegrooms were gay, but not loaded with Ornaments, ſave that *Lætitia* and her Lord, in this Particular, ſtudiouſly contrived to outvie their Friends; perhaps, on account of their ſuperior Rank, which little Minds can ſupport by nothing but their Dreſs and Attendance.

The

The Ceremony was performed with edifying Seriouſneſs; and, contrary to Cuſtom, Decency, and Purity of Sentiment, diſtinguiſhed the Entertainment of the ſucceeding Evening.

Mr. *Worthy* and his *Maria*, Col. *Beaumont* and his *Henrietta*, are, at this Day, remarkable Examples of the Happineſs of the Marriage State, contracted from a mutual Love, founded on good Senſe and Virtue; nor does the Morning-Sun ariſe, or the Evening-Sun deſcend, without witneſſing their increaſing Felicity. Their excellent Parents (inſeparable Friends) ſurvey their Proſperity, and their mutual Tenderneſs for each other, with Heart-felt Satisfaction; and the good Lady *Latimer* divides her Time amongſt Perſons ſhe ſo ſincerely eſteems, who often viſit, alſo, the Manſion where their Happineſs commenced.

Lord *Beaumont* and his Lady, if not a ſenſible, are a decent Couple; and as yet have behaved with as much Prudence as could be expected from their Tempers and Attainments. The good Mr. *Worthy* and Mr. *Welldone* manage that Nobleman's Eſtates, and have perſuaded him to live in a retired Manner till the Incumbrances of them are cleared off. Though this is a ſenſible Mortification to the Counteſs, who adores Splendor and Magnificence; yet Fear of diſobliging Lady *Latimer*, and the reſt of her Friends, induces her to bear it with ſome Degree of Patience. Dr. *Howard* (ſince married.

married to Miſs *Burnet*), and Mr. *Burnet*; ſee their Patrons and their Families as frequently as the Duties of their Function will permit.

They are received with the Reſpect due to their Merits and Character, and are edified with the Behaviour and Manners of their Friends, who are a convincing Proof that ſtrict Piety and Morality, and the Practice of all the religious and ſocial Duties, are not incompatible with innocent Mirth, rational Amuſements, and the moſt delicate Refinements of polite Life.

FINIS.

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